

Post Nasal Drip and Your Breath

The human nose is a natural filter picking up dust particles, bacteria and other air pollutants on a daily basis. With the normal production of mucus, the debris collected is then swept to the back of the throat by millions of tiny hair like structures called cilia. These cilia line the nasal cavity and then are swallowed. Once in the stomach the acids destroy any dangerous bacteria. Although this sounds pretty disgusting, it is a routine bodily function that most people do not notice because the mucus is very thin.

This is where postnasal drip enters in. If the mucus just sits in the back of the throat, the anaerobic bacteria will start to break down the proteins found in the mucous and phlegm. The mucus is seen as a food source and the bacteria will then start to extract sulfur compounds from the amino acids. As you can see from this process postnasal drip will transform a case of normal breath into atrocious breath.

The anaerobic bacteria that thrive in an environment free of oxygen love the amino acids that are found in mucus, phlegm, dairy, and other high protein foods. The reason being that the mucus protects the bacteria from being exposed to oxygen, it acts like a shield around the bacteria. In fact, many people notice that when they drink too much milk or eat too much cheese, they end up with more mucus or phlegm in their throat.

Mucus typically contains abundant amounts of bacteria and proteins from the sinuses. These proteins are then broken down to amino acids that the anaerobic bacteria feast upon. The mucus also protects the halitosis-causing bacteria from being exposed to oxygen because anaerobic bacteria cannot survive in the presence of oxygen. Being harbored by mucous, allows the bacteria to thrive and produce bad breath odors. Individuals suffering from a cold or flu commonly generate large amounts of this mucus.

Antihistamines and medications developed for the relief of postnasal drip dry up the sinuses and prevent mucous buildup. This is a good thing because now you can breathe out of both sides of you nose instead on only one or none. The antihistamines, however, may also cause dry mouth. Dry mouth is another source of bad breath because it mimics an anaerobic environment. The way to eliminate dry mouth if it is necessary to take antihistamines or other medications that have a drying effect, would be to remain hydrated throughout the day by drinking plenty of fluids, preferably water. Another way to maintain saliva production if you are experiencing dry mouth would be to chew gum.

Keeping the mucus thin is important. Obviously it is quite uncomfortable to have a chunk of gunk hanging at the back of your throat that you cannot expel. One of the other ways to thinning the mucus is through enjoying a hot shower or sauna and keeping the air moist with a humidifier. You can also add herbs to the water in the humidifier to help you rest. Hot liquids, which seem to be very soothing especially during the winter months, will help thin out the mucus. Try peppermint tea and broths or soups because these are often beneficial in relieving postnasal drip.

Relief may be found in a nasal sinus formula or a nasal sinus irrigator to flush the sinuses of oxygenating oral care products that minimize the amount of post-nasal drip you may be experiencing. Nasal sinus drops are intended to cleanse and alleviate excessive mucus accumulation, as are AktivOxigen tablets. These can be used as a mouthwash or a rinse to flood the back of the tongue and throat with oxygen. These products are effective at neutralizing the volatile sulfur compounds.

In conclusion, people who suffer with postnasal drip are more prone to bad breath and lousy tastes because the bacteria will start to extract sulfur compounds from the amino acids that make up these proteins. They love the amino acids, which are common to mucous and phlegm, and also in dairy foods. Remember every case of bad breath, is different and there is no such thing as one formula to treat every case of halitosis. Methods that work for one person may not work for another. If you find you are unable to control your postnasal drip, consult your doctor.

About the Author

Anthony Stai is a proud contributing author and writes articles on several Dental related topics including dental plans. You can see more of Anthony's other articles on his [Self-Improvement eBooks](http://www.self-improvementresources.com) informational web site located at <http://www.self-improvementresources.com>

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