

May the Force be with you - By Geraldine Teo

If you aren't among the lucky two per cent of the world's population playing host to a bacteria called *Streptococcus salivarius* K12 (yes, we did say "lucky"), then you may need the Force. KForce, that is. It is a dentally proven probiotic system to fight the evil enemy, Breath Vader. Or should we say breath invader?

While it sounds icky, K12 is one bacteria you do want, and the even ickier news is that this bacteria lives in your mouth. Before you freak out, K12 is not one of the bad guys. It's a naturally occurring bacteria that is present in healthy people, and people who do not suffer from bad breath. On the other hand, people with chronic bad breath (or halitosis) typically have low levels of the K12 bacteria. Studies at Harvard University in the USA and Otago University in New Zealand, show that K12 works pretty much like a light saber – zapping away the bad bacteria that live in your mouth and give you bad breath. In other words, fight bad bacteria with good bacteria you must - if bad breath elimination and saving a social empire is your goal. Enter Australian dentist and bad breath Jedi, Dr Geoffrey Speiser, an unassuming oral care practitioner who pioneered oral care probiotics in Australia and New Zealand.

"The discovery of probiotic treatment could potentially provide the answer to millions of bad breath and halitosis sufferers all over the world; but overall well-being is also key to maintaining fresh and clean breath. Quitting smoking, brushing your tongue, using an inter-dental cleaner to clean between the teeth, eating less meat and cutting down on alcohol are also good self-care practices," says Dr Speiser, the voice of doom for many beloved and established lifestyle practices - and preferences!

KForce, his patented oral care probiotic system, is built on this revolutionary breakthrough of fighting bad bacteria with good, probiotic-friendly bacteria to attain healthy and fresh breath. Brushing your teeth, using mouthwash and chewing gum is now no longer effective in the fight against bad breath. At best, these are cosmetic and temporary measures, often treating the symptom and not the root or cause of the problem. We need a much more formidable weapon to strike back. As most generals will tell you, you have to know the enemy to fight the enemy. Know the enemy, fight the enemy. Let's firstly determine what causes bad breath. According to Dr Speiser, the main cause is an increase of bacteria in the mouth, specifically on the tongue. These bacteria eat (or breakdown) the proteins in the coating that builds up on the tongue surface. This action then releases sulphur compounds that is exhaled through our mouth and nasal passage as an odious smelling gas, or bad breath.

The KForce approach to fighting bad breath is simple. Apart from the basic brush-floss-mouthwash routine, the KForce probiotic system in effect replaces the bad bacteria with good guys (K12). To fight the enemy: Colonise. If you do not have K12 in your mouth, Dr Speiser recommends you colonise your mouth with KForce Probiotics. These are able to make BLIS (Bacteriocin-Like Inhibitory Substance) peptides that fight the bad breath bacteria by rupturing their cell wall, and prevent their growth. K12 does not metabolise proteins and as such cannot produce smelly sulphur compounds like bad breath bacteria. As with all probiotics, it is recommended you maintain a daily dose to continually replenish your system, failing which bad breath bacteria will return to dominate the mouth and throat. Ward off future encroachments.

Science has shown that bad breath bacteria bury themselves in the coating that builds up on the teeth and tongue. If these coatings can be kept less than 24 hours old, then the bad breath bacteria cannot sustain themselves within the coating. It is therefore essential to remove these coatings everyday. Full-pronged attack. Cover all your bases not just the teeth, as it is folly to neglect to clean the tongue. The KForce system has a KForce Gel which is applied to the tongue surface for 60 seconds, after which the

tongue surface is cleaned gently with a spoon-shaped tongue cleaner. This scrapes off all waste from the tongue surface, destroying the bacteria-breeding environment. Use the Force KForce Breath Guard Gel which contains healthy natural ingredients like Grape Seed Extract (an anti-oxidant), Propolis, Xylitol, as well as Zinc, Fluoride, Pyrophosphates and Natural Silica, not only gives you fresh breath, it has the added benefit of whitening teeth.

The Bad Breath Test It's safe to say most bad breath sufferers need little proof that they have a problem. Nonetheless, it's better to get an official reading. The Halimeter is a breath-reading device that is used to diagnose the degree of bad breath in a person. This machine is able to measure the smallest amounts of sulphur compounds in your mouth, as low as 1 part per billion (ppb). The results are instant, with a digital reading available within 10 seconds. Halimeter Reading (ppb) Diagnosis Under 150 - Normal 150-200 - Slight bad breath (not that noticeable) 200-500 - Moderate bad breath (obvious when talking) Over 500 - Get help quick! (bad breath lingers on after you leave the room)

Rebel forces at work? While there are many causes of bad breath, what we eat is quite often the most significant factor. Conventional wisdom will tell us to avoid the usual suspects like garlic and onions, but does a spicy diet contribute in part to bad breath? If we love spicy food, is that fomenting an internal rebellion all on its own? Spicy food leads to what Dr Speiser terms "dry mouth", or a lack of saliva. Dry mouth means your mouth is starved of oxygen, which then promotes the growth of anaerobic bacteria. The result in short – bad breath. However, Dr Speiser contends that more tests will have to be done to prove that spicy food in itself is the cause of bad breath. Dr Bad Breath, at your service

If you need further help, or wish to know more about the probiotic treatment, Dr Geoffrey Speiser is at your service. With more than 25 years experience in treating all dental conditions, and a special interest in bad breath and halitosis, Dr Speiser was the first person to establish The Australian Bad Breath Clinic. Patients here undergo a personalised lifestyle examination, saliva quality testing, breath testing and dental examination (if necessary) to determine the best treatment for their 'condition'.