

# Banish **BAD** BREATH

Take our quiz and find out what it takes to keep your breath sweet. By Jane Worthington



## WHAT PERCENTAGE OF AUSTRALIANS SUFFER FROM PERSISTENTLY BAD BREATH?

- A** 50 PER CENT
- B** 20 PER CENT
- C** 10 PER CENT
- D** 2 PER CENT

*Answer:* **A.**

> "One in two people will have persistently bad breath at some stage in their life, and it increases with age," says Dr Geoffrey Speiser, dentist and chief executive of the Australian Breath Clinic.

"Babies don't have bad breath because they dribble a lot of saliva, have no teeth to trap food and don't smoke or drink to impact their breath!"

## WHICH DISEASE IS LINKED TO BAD BREATH?

- A** GUM DISEASE
- B** DIABETES
- C** LIVER DISEASE
- D** ALL OF THE ABOVE



*Answer:* **D.**

> "More than 95 per cent of bad breath is simply related to a bacterial imbalance in the mouth," says Speiser. "This can be triggered by poor oral hygiene and gum disease, gastric reflux, dry mouth, stress, smoking, sinus problems or even a diet very high in cheese and milk."

He says other causes of bad breath include diabetes, while liver disease and some kidney or metabolic illnesses can cause bad breath, too.



## WHAT MEDICATIONS CAN WORSEN BAD BREATH?

- A** BLOOD PRESSURE MEDICATIONS
- B** COLD MEDICATIONS
- C** ANTIDEPRESSANTS
- D** ALL THE ABOVE

*Answer:* **D.**

> "Many prescription medications can dry out the mouth," says Speiser. If dry mouth wakes you at night, speak to your doctor about dosage adjustment or changing medications. Drink plenty of water throughout the day and before bed."

## IN WHICH CONDITION DOES BAD BREATH SPECIFICALLY BECOME A PROBLEM FOR THE PERSON, BUT NOT FOR THOSE AROUND THEM?

- A** DEPRESSION
- B** SCHIZOPHRENIA
- C** SINUS/ALLERGY
- D** MIGRAINE HEADACHE

*Answer:* **C.**

> "People who smell bad breath on themselves may have an underlying sinus problem.

Usually it's too far back for others to notice, but it can be soul-destroying for them. Treating the problem with nasal washes and allergy treatments can help," says Speiser.



## WHICH FOOD IS MOST LIKELY TO CAUSE BAD BREATH?

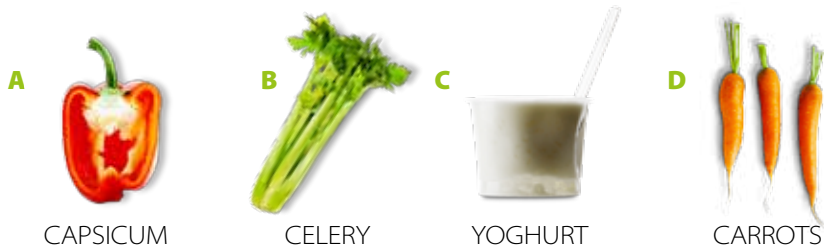
- A**  MILK & CHEESE
- B**  POTATO
- C**  YOGHURT

———— **D** ALL OF THE ABOVE ————

*Answer:* **A.**

> "Excessive [consumption of] cheese and milk make the mucus thicker so it's harder for your body to clean away or remove," says Speiser. "These foods also, specifically, have high levels of two amino acids that are linked to bad breath – cysteine and methyl mercaptam."

## WHICH FOOD HAS BEEN CLINICALLY PROVEN TO BEAT BAD BREATH?



**Answer: C.**

> In one small Japanese clinical study, eating unsweetened plain yoghurt daily for six weeks reduced levels of oral hydrogen sulphide – one of the main causes of bad breath – in 80 per cent of participants. The evidence, which was presented at a meeting of the International Association of Dental Research, found

active bacteria (specifically *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* and *Streptococcus thermophilus*) in the yoghurts were the odour destroyers.

Vitamin C is important for healthy gums, and foods such as capsicum that are high in this nutrient can help to a lesser degree, says Speiser. Meanwhile, chewing hard foods like carrots and celery is also good because they massage the gums.

## INSIDE INFORMATION

Dr Speiser pinpoints some of the causes of bad breath.

### TONGUE BAD BREATH

Signs are a yellow coating on the tongue, or if the person licks the back of their hand it may be whiffy. The best way to clean your tongue is to scrub it with a tongue gel or toothpaste first, and then use a scraper or spoon to remove debris.

### GUM BAD BREATH

The person may notice bleeding gums, may not floss often, and when they do the floss will be pungent. Improving oral hygiene can help in many cases.

### THROAT/NOSE BAD BREATH

Nasal drip and hoarseness or clearing of the throat may be an issue. People on allergy medications may also be at risk. Using a hypertonic salt flush in a pressure pack, available from chemists, can help.

### LIFESTYLE BAD BREATH

Dieting can cause bad breath, along with milk and cheese, coffee, diet drinks, smoking, heavy drinking or even stress. If these are your triggers, try to avoid them.

To locate a breath clinic, visit [www.breezecare.com.au](http://www.breezecare.com.au) or call 1300 653 335.

## HOW CAN PASSIONATE KISSING CAUSE BAD BREATH?

- A** BY INTRODUCING NEW STRAINS OF BACTERIA TO THE MOUTH
- B** BY PASSING FOOD DEBRIS BETWEEN PEOPLE
- C** BY INCREASING ADRENALINE THAT CAUSES DRY MOUTH

**Answer: A.**

> "Bad breath bacteria can be transmitted transiently through kissing, but generally will not survive in the mouth for more than a few hours," says Speiser.

## HOW CAN A TONGUE PIERCING GIVE YOU BAD BREATH?

- A** THERE IS MORE CHANCE OF CONTRACTING A MOUTH INFECTION
- B** FOREIGN BODY MEANS LESS SALIVA IS PRODUCED
- C** CORROSION OF THE PIERCING

**Answer: A.**

> "There's more chance of contracting a mouth infection and/or pungent breath from bacteria getting trapped around the piercing," says Speiser.

# 7 simple steps to fresher breath

ELIMINATING HALITOSIS DOESN'T HAVE TO BE DIFFICULT. HERE ARE SEVEN SMART WAYS TO TACKLE THE CULPRITS.

- 1** Rinse your mouth three times a day after every meal and use a tongue scraper. "Tongue scraping will also remove food particles and bacteria, and a clean mouth is less likely to smell," says Speiser.
- 2** Use the right equipment. Remember to buy a proper tongue scraper instead of a toothbrush, which can make you gag. "Failing that, use a spoon," says Speiser.
- 3** Brush twice a day, for two minutes, using a soft brush, circular motions and not so hard that you damage the enamel of the teeth.

- 4** Stay hydrated. "Drink water frequently, and try to avoid alcohol-based mouthwashes which can dry your mouth, as can alcohol and smoking," says Speiser.
- 5** See your dentist every six months if you have gum disease that needs to be kept under control.
- 6** Avoid coffee or other acid attacks caused by cola drinks or sugary foods. "If you do have a lot of these chew sugarless gum afterwards for five minutes to increase saliva production and neutralise the acid attack," says Speiser.

