

# Bad breath eroding your confidence?

Your dentist can help the problem. *by Dr. Susan Maples*

**N**othing ruins a romantic moment or a job interview more than dragon breath! The first question you might ask is: Is it something I ate? Maybe.

Certain foods including onion and garlic are absorbed into the bloodstream and expelled through your lungs. As a remedy try raw kiwi, eggplant, mushrooms or parsley to tone down the smell. But if your halitosis is a 24/7 menace you may have an oral or systemic health problem.

If you don't brush and floss daily, food and bacteria can cause the odor. Don't forget to brush your tongue too—or better yet pick up a tongue scraper. A bigger issue is periodontal (gum) disease, where bone loss creates pockets that harbor more bacteria as well as dying gum tissue.

This wicked smell is what we, in the dental office refer to as “perio breath.” And since most smokers also have perio

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disease, the combination of dry mouth (from cigarettes), smoke and rotting gums is enough to knock a moose dead. If you suspect gingivitis or gum disease, see your dentist for help—you'll also be reducing your risk of heart attack and stroke, just for starters.

Other common causes of foul breath include tooth decay, yeast infections (candida), respiratory infections, sinusitis, post-nasal drip, diabetes, acid reflux and other GI disturbances.

Medication(s) you take might also be

the cause. Similar to food, meds can also be absorbed into the bloodstream and exhaled through the lungs. Plus, there's the all-too-common side effect of dry mouth.

Without adequate saliva to rinse bacteria and food particles you can expect bad breath, not to mention a perfect breeding ground for cavity-causing bacteria to do its thing.

All the toothpaste, mouth rinse, gum and mints in the world are not enough to cover bad breath from oral or systemic disease.

If you are embarrassed of bad breath and want your confidence back, consult your dentist and physician to help you identify the root cause and take action.



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