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The Link Between Oral Hygiene and Bad Breath

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THE LINK BETWEEN ORAL HYGIENE AND BAD BREATH

Have you ever experienced an unpleasant odor arising from your mouth? What could be the causes behind this foul-smelling breath? Does chronic bad breath indicate a health issue? Chronic bad breath creates inconvenience that might indicate a deeper health issue.

Introduction:

Oral malodor/bad breath is a major issue faced by many people worldwide, mostly caused by poor oral hygiene. The food particles in the mouth are broken down by the bacteria producing sulfur compounds that emanate bad odor. People with malodor tend to clean their tongue and mouth regularly with the frequent use of mints, mouthwashes, & chewing gums to reduce their distress. The tongue can retain large amounts of microorganisms, and desquamated cells, due to the large papillary surface area. Chronic bad breath can indicate a gum disease that can be resolved by dental cleaning and maintenance.



Bad breath/oral malodor affects many people globally

Causes:

- ✓ Poor oral hygiene can result in an invasion of harmful bacteria in your oral cavity that cause several other health issues like gum disease, and cavities.
- ✓ Dry mouth: Salivary production can keep your mouth hydrated. Factors like smoking, and certain medications can cause a decrease in salivary production.
- ✓ Symptoms of oropharyngeal cancer that include unhealed sores, mouth pain, & difficulty in swallowing.
- ✓ Gastroesophageal reflux disease: A digestive disorder in which the acid/fluid leaks from the stomach back into the esophagus.
- ✓ People with infections in the nose, throat, and lungs cough up fluid with a bad smell.
- ✓ Diabetes: People with diabetes have an increased risk of gum disease that can result in bad odor.
- ✓ Gingivitis- It is an inflammation of gum tissues caused by a sticky film called plaque that builds up on your tooth surface. Untreated inflammation can result in tooth and bone loss.
- ✓ Foreign body: Bad odor results from a foreign body that will be lodged in the nasal cavity, particularly in children.



Symptoms:

The main symptom is bad breath that doesn't fade and will be noticed by other people. The specific odor varies depending on the intensity of the problem.

Diagnosis:

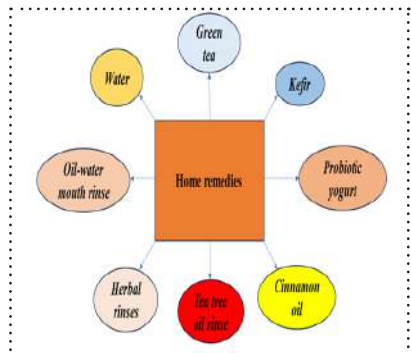
The diagnosis is based on the odor in the air exhaled from the mouth. Odor detected from the mouth is most likely pharyngeal or oral. The odor emanating from the nose is mostly coming from sinuses. The dentist can rate the odor's intensity on a six-point scale. The detectors that rate odor include the BANA test, halimeter, gas chromatography, etc.

Treatment:

Maintaining proper oral hygiene reduces halitosis. Toothpaste containing an antibacterial agent or an antibacterial mouthwash can be recommended. In cases of inflammation of the gums, professional cleaning is essential to clear the bacteria between the teeth and gums. Other methods include:

- Effective brushing: Brush your teeth at least twice a day, particularly after meals.
- Tongue scraping: Tongue holds bacteria due to the vast surface area. Regular tongue cleaning can reduce malodor in the long term.
- Interdental flossing: Helps to remove the food particles collected between the teeth, and reduce bacterial growth
- Regular use of mouthwash can reduce malodor. Eg: chlorhexidine gluconate, cetylpyridinium chloride, etc.
- A two-phase oil-water mouthwash can reduce oral malodor
- Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated that helps in washing out the bacteria
- Reduce the intake of sugary foods, onion, garlic, and spicy food.
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco, and coffee.

Home remedies:



Conclusion:

Oral malodor is a common health condition that can result in low self-esteem. Poor oral hygiene, gum disease, and systemic health conditions can cause oral malodor. Tongue scraping, interdental flossing, brushing, and regular dental check-ups are essential for maintaining proper oral hygiene. If the problem persists even after maintenance of oral hygiene, a medical evaluation is necessary to rule out any underlying condition. Addressing both

the systemic, and oral causes is essential to eliminate oral malodor, leading to overall confidence.



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BENEFITS OF WALKING 10,000 STEPS

Helps in weight loss (Icon: Scale with 'KG' and downward arrow)

Increases lung capacity (Icon: Lungs)

Improves heart health (Icon: Heart with pulse line)

Improves mood (Icon: Smiley face and sad face)

Reduces chronic diseases (Icon: Bar chart with upward arrow)

Improves varicose veins (Icon: Leg with vein)

Reduces stroke risk in women (Icon: Woman's head)

Boosts immunity (Icon: Shield with cross and flowers)

Decreases diabetes risk (Icon: Blood glucose meter showing '5.5')

Prevents disability in old age (Icon: Person in wheelchair)

Lowers blood pressure (Icon: Blood pressure cuff and heart)

Speeds up digestion (Icon: Person eating)

Courtesy: Dr. Sanjay Agrawal, Visiting Faculty, GIHM, Delhi.