

Top Ten Tips for Improving Bad Breath

Suffering from bad breath, but not sure why? Think about drinking more water and using less mouthwash. Find out why and learn more ways to improve your breath with these top ten tips.

Call it by its fancy name, “halitosis,” and it won’t smell any sweeter. Bad breath is frequently a sign that you’re not keeping up with your oral health. The source of this unpleasant odor is, in most cases, bacteria living on your teeth, gums or tongue. Follow these ten tips for a breath of fresh air:

Brush your choppers twice each day. Better yet, brush after every meal. If you eat lunch at work or school, keep an extra toothbrush there. Also, be sure to replace your toothbrush regularly. Every few months, swap your brush for a fresh one.

Reach between your teeth. Flossing daily helps you remove food particles from between your teeth, where your toothbrush just can’t reach. Flossing also helps keep your gums healthy, preventing periodontal disease, which can also lead to bad breath. If using regular floss is difficult for you, try one of the many interdental cleaners available at drugstores.

Pick up an electric toothbrush. Along with floss, an electric toothbrush removes plaque better than a manual toothbrush.

Treat your tongue right. Bacteria can gather on the surface of your tongue, so use a soft-bristled toothbrush or a tongue scraper to clean it every time you brush.

Tap your inner teenager and chew gum. The act of chewing (sugarless!) gum stimulates the production of saliva, which naturally washes away bacteria and food particles. If you suffer from a lack of saliva due to “dry mouth,” a condition sometimes caused

by medication, let us know; we can help address the problem.

Don’t fall for the myth of mouthwash. Most mouthwashes merely mask the smell of bad breath and don’t do anything to solve the underlying problem.

Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate. Drink water regularly to keep your mouth moist, and go easy on alcohol and caffeine, both of which are dehydrating.

Turn off the tobacco. Smoking and chewing tobacco lead to bad breath. They also increase your risk of a host of serious health problems, from periodontal disease to cancer.

Take note of what you take in. Certain diets, foods and medications can affect your breath. If your problem doesn’t appear to be oral, make a list of the foods you eat and medications you take. Review it with your dentist or your family doctor to assess the source of the problem.

Call in the experts. It’s important to have your teeth professionally checked and cleaned twice a year. Your dentist can give your teeth a thorough cleaning that isn’t possible at home, as well as check for and treat early signs of problems such as cavities or periodontal disease.

In rare cases, persistent bad breath can be a sign of a larger health problem. The American Dental Association lists possible medical sources of bad breath, including respiratory infection, chronic sinusitis, postnasal drip, chronic bronchitis, diabetes, gastrointestinal disturbance, and liver or kidney ailments. If your dentist suspects that your breath problem stems from a medical issue, he or she will recommend speaking with your family doctor immediately.

Submitted by Dr. Flury



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What's Cooking With Food Allergies

Ever wonder why some packaged foods include the warning “made in a facility that processes nuts?” There’s a very good reason—some people can develop a life-threatening allergic reaction to eating tree nuts called anaphylaxis. There are a number of foods that can cause serious allergic reactions in certain people, says Thomas Smith, M.D., an allergist and immunologist for The Austin Diagnostic Clinic (ADC).

“From peanuts to dairy products to shellfish, there are several primary sources of food allergies affecting some 15 million Americans” says Dr. Smith.

A food allergy occurs when a person’s immune system mistakenly attacks a food protein. Dr. Smith says allergy symptoms can range from mild reactions like rashes, hives, itching and swelling, to severe, potentially fatal issues such as trouble breathing or loss of consciousness.

UNDERSTANDING FOOD ALLERGIES

People with food allergy almost always have clear cut symptoms when eating a particular food. They usually know the food they are allergic to, or they at least have figured out a short list of possibilities. Either way, it’s a good idea to see an allergist to determine whether a food allergy exists and what food should be avoided. This is done by a review of a person’s history of symptoms and checking for food allergies with a skin test. It is also common for people to experience an adverse effect from a food that is not an allergy. Distinguishing this is important because adverse effects that are not allergic do not carry the same risk of severe reactions, explains Dr. Smith.

“Once we have identified the source of a food allergy, unfortunately the only way to prevent an allergic reaction is to avoid the food. There is no cure for a food allergy,” says Dr. Smith. “If you are unsure about whether a particular food

is safe, it’s always a good idea to call the manufacturer for more information.”

If a person unknowingly eats a food they are allergic to, the best option is to administer epinephrine, also called adrenaline. This is the medication of choice for controlling a severe reaction. It is available by prescription as a self-injectable device called EpiPen or Twinject. Dr. Smith says patients should always have two doses available because some reactions that go away with one dose of epinephrine may return, requiring a second dose.

Parents with children with food allergies understandably are concerned when their children are at school. Virtually every state, including Texas, allows children to carry epinephrine during school with appropriate consent. Legislation passed last year in Texas, meanwhile, calls for the creation of food allergy management guidelines for schools.

PRIMARY SOURCES OF FOOD ALLERGIES

The six most common foods causing allergy in children are milk, eggs, peanuts, wheat, peas, and soy. Tree nuts, fish, and shellfish are foods commonly causing allergy in children and adults. Allergy to one food occurs most often, while allergy to multiple foods is less likely. Here is a look at the main sources of food allergies in more detail:

Peanuts. Peanuts can trigger a severe allergic reaction depending on how sensitive a person is to peanuts, and the quantity of peanuts consumed. Peanuts may be included in food items such as chili sauce, salad dressing, pizza, peanut cooking oil, egg rolls, and even jelly beans.

Tree nuts. Tree nut allergies affect an estimated 1.8 million Americans and are among the leading causes of fatal and near-fatal reactions to foods. Common types of tree nuts causing allergies include walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, cashews,

pistachios, and Brazil nuts.

Milk. About 2.5 percent of children younger than age 3 are allergic to milk, but most children outgrow milk allergies within a few years.

Eggs. An estimated 1.5 percent of young children have an egg allergy, but experts say most children eventually outgrow it.

Wheat. Wheat allergy is one of the more common food allergies in children. Wheat can be found in many food items such as breads, cakes, breakfast cereals, pasta, crackers, soy sauce and even condiments such as ketchup.

Soy. Although soybean allergies are generally mild, soybeans are used in myriad food items including baked goods, canned tuna, cereals, crackers, infant formulas, sauces, and soups.

Seafood. Nearly 7 million people in the United States are allergic to seafood, including fish and shellfish like shrimp, crab, and lobster. Salmon, tuna, and halibut are the most common kinds of fish people are allergic to. Seafood allergy is considered a lifelong condition and about 40 percent of those with a seafood allergy first experience an allergic reaction as an adult.

BEYOND THE USUAL FOOD ALLERGY SUSPECTS

Dr. Smith says that while these seven types of food account for 90 percent of all food allergies, a person can be allergic to virtually any food.

Other potential allergy-prone foods include corn, seeds, meats, and spices such as caraway, coriander, garlic, and mustard. Allergic reactions can also occur with fresh fruits and vegetables such as apples, carrots, peaches, plums, strawberries, tomatoes, and bananas.

“Awareness of a food allergy and early treatment with epinephrine are the most important ingredients in preventing a potentially dangerous reaction,” says Dr. Smith.

Recipe of the Month - Potato Cake Stacked Salmon

*This recipe has it all; delicious salmon, watercress, tangy aioli all stacked onto a crisp potato pancake.
My problem with this recipe is that I didn't make enough (or rather we ate it all). - By The Four Points Foodie*

INGREDIENTS

- Salmon filet
- juice of 1 lime
- cedar plank
- 4 potatoes
- 1 egg
- 1/4 C flour
- Lawry's Season Salt
- 2 T olive oil
- 2 bunches watercress
- 4 T mayonnaise
- 1 1/2 T capers
- 1 T Durkee Sauce
- juice of 1 lemon
- salt and pepper
- zest of 1 lemon

DIRECTIONS

Preheat your grill and soak the cedar plank for about 30 minutes in water. Squeeze lime juice over salmon filet and season with salt and pepper. Place on cedar plank and grill until done and flaky. Peel potatoes and parboil whole for about 10 minutes, starting with potatoes covered with room temperature water and heat from there. Immerse in cold water. Remove from water, dry and let cool. Meanwhile, in a small bowl mash capers with a spoon. Then add mayonnaise, Durkee Sauce (or a brown mustard with a hint of horseradish), lemon juice and Lawry's Season Salt.

Once the potatoes are cool enough to touch, grate with a box grater into a medium bowl. Add a bit of Lawry's Season Salt. In a small bowl combine egg and flour and whisk well and add to potatoes. In a large fry pan, heat the olive oil over medium high heat. Make 4 large potato patties and place in hot oil. Leave it alone for 4-5 minutes until it crisps then flip to the other side and cook an additional 5 minutes. Drain on paper towels. To assemble, start with a potato cake, then a handful of watercress, then a piece of cedar plank salmon, topped with the aioli sauce. Garnish with zest of lemon and serve.



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A Focus on Physical Activity - Pathway to Improved Health

By Concentra Urgent Care

Being physically active is one of the most important steps you can take to maintain or improve your health. When combined with eating a healthy diet, regular exercise can substantially reduce your risk of chronic disease, prevent weight gain, and improve your overall level of physical and emotional fitness.

HOW MUCH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DO I NEED?

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) has recently published several recommendations related to exercise:

Any physical activity is better than no physical activity

- Includes people with disabilities & far outweighs the possibility of risk of injury or illness

Most health benefits occur with at least 150 minutes a week

- Both aerobic (endurance) and muscle-strengthening (resistance) are beneficial

For most people, additional benefits occur when

- You increase the intensity, the frequency, and or the duration of your Physical activity.

SHOULD OLDER ADULTS EXERCISE, TOO?

The same HHS guidelines apply, but older adults need to make sure that their fitness level and any chronic conditions allow them to safely perform physical activity. For example, if an older adult is at risk of falling, he should do exercises that maintain or improve his balance.

WHAT IF I HAVE A CHRONIC MEDICAL CONDITION?

If you have a chronic medical condition, you should be under the care of a health care provider. It is important to consult your physician about the type and amount of physical activity appropriate for you.

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

The health benefits of physical activity far outweigh the risks and some activity is better than none. Persons who have not been diagnosed with a chronic condition (such as diabetes, heart disease, or osteoarthritis) and do not have symptoms (e.g., chest pain or pressure, dizziness, or joint pain) do not need to consult with a health care provider prior to starting an exercise program.

For more information on total fitness programs in general, you can contact your health care provider, your Concentra health specialist, or visit the National Safety Council's Web site at: <http://www.nsc.org/resources/Factsheets/hl/fitness.aspx>.

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Financial Focus

The 5 Biggest Threats to Your Retirement Nest Egg

Submitted by Rich Keith

It's tough for financial planners to get clients motivated enough to make the sacrifices and investment decisions that are necessary to ensure a comfortable retirement. In fact, according to a recent ING Retirement Research Institute study, 71% of Americans – regardless of age – still lack a formal investment plan to help them reach their retirement goals. But what about those clients who have done everything right? They've been working with a financial planner, contributing to their 401(k)s, maybe have a pension in the offing, are saving money at a decent clip and are following the sound investment advice offered by the professionals but, according to Fidelity Investments, there's still a good chance they might not have enough put aside to live out their golden years in style. Fidelity Investments has described five of the biggest threats to even the most well-prepared investor's retirement plan.

1. Failing to prepare for spiraling health care costs. With longer life spans, medical costs that are rising faster than general inflation, declining retiree medical coverage by private employers, and possible funding shortfalls ahead for Medicare and Medicaid, managing health care costs can be a critical challenge for retirees. According to Fidelity's annual Retiree Health Care Costs Estimate, a 65-year-old couple retiring in 2011 will need more than \$235,000 to cover health care costs during their retirement. And that is just using life expectancy data – many people will live longer and have higher costs. Since Fidelity started the annual estimate in 2002, estimated costs have increased by 6% a year. That cost doesn't include possible long term care (LTC) expenses. About 70% of those over age 65 will require some type of LTC services – either at home, or else, in adult day care, an assisted living facility, or a traditional nursing home. The average private-pay cost of a nursing home is about \$70,000 per year and exceeds \$100,000 in some states. Assisted living facilities average \$34,000 per



year. Hourly home care agency rates average \$46 for a Medicare-certified home health aide and \$19 for a licensed non-Medicare-certified home health aide.

2. Underestimating how long you will live. As medical advances continue, it's quite likely that today's healthy 65-year-olds will live well into their 80s or even 90s. This means there's a real possibility that you may need 30 or more years of retirement income. An American man who's reached age 65 in good health has a 50% chance of living 20 more years to age 85, and a 25% chance of living to 92. For a 65-year-old woman, those odds rise to a 50% chance of living to age 88 and a one in four chance of living to 94. The odds that at least one member of a 65-year-old couple will live to 92 are 50% and there's a 25% chance at least one of them will reach age 97. Without some thoughtful planning, you could easily outlive your savings and have to rely solely on Social Security for your income. Chances are, like many people, you don't have a company pension to rely on – only 30% of Americans today have one. And with the average Social Security benefit of just over \$1,000 a month, it likely won't cover all your needs.

3. Being caught unawares by inflation. Inflation can eat away at the purchasing power of your money over time. This affects your retirement income by increasing the future costs of goods and services, thereby reducing the purchasing power of your income. Even a relatively low inflation rate can have a significant impact on a retiree's purchasing power. For example, \$50,000

today would be worth only \$30,477 in 25 years, even with a relatively low 2% inflation. Some retirement income sources, such as Social Security, can help you keep pace with inflation automatically through annual cost-of-living adjustments. But most others don't.

4. Failing to position investments for growth. A too-conservative investment strategy can be just as dangerous as a too-aggressive one. It exposes your portfolio to the erosive effects of inflation and limits the long-term upside potential that diversified investments can offer. On the other hand, being too aggressive can mean undue risk in down or volatile markets. What can help: a strategy that seeks to keep the growth potential for your investments without too much risk. Consider creating a diversified portfolio according to your risk tolerance, overall financial situation, and investment time horizon. Doing so may help you seek the growth you need in a way that lets you sleep at night. But remember that diversification/asset allocation does not ensure a profit or guarantee against a loss.

5. Withdrawing too much from savings. Drawing down your savings too rapidly can also put your retirement plan at risk. This risk can be magnified further if a sustained market downturn—similar to the one in 2007-09—occurs early in retirement. Retirees should consider using conservative withdrawal rates, particularly for any assets needed for essential expenses. Fortunately, you have control over how much you withdraw and can adjust it based on circumstances. Consider keeping your withdrawals as conservative as you can. Later on, if your expenses drop or your investment portfolio grows, you may be able to raise that rate. For financial peace of mind, work with your financial coach to make sure your family is taken care of. Source: adapted from an article in Financial Planning magazine citing Fidelity Investments research.

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