

how clean is
your mouth?

39%

of readers admit
to not flossing.

— glow poll, July 2003

health
SLEUTH

BREATHE EASY

Bad breath. Halitosis. Oral malodour. No matter what you call it, it stinks. From mouthwash to tongue scrapers, find out how to keep odours at bay

MOUTHWASH: THE CLASSIC REMEDY

1914: Listerine is first marketed to consumers as a mouthwash.

EFFICACY: Clinically proven to reduce plaque and gingivitis by up to 34 percent over brushing and flossing alone.

INGREDIENTS: Germ-killing eucalyptol, thymol, menthol and alcohol.

HOW TO USE: Rinse for 30 seconds twice a day.

WE SAY: So strong, it hurts, but the after-effects are amazing – mouth feels totally disinfected.

Original Listerine (250 mL), \$4

1967: Scope is launched in Canada.

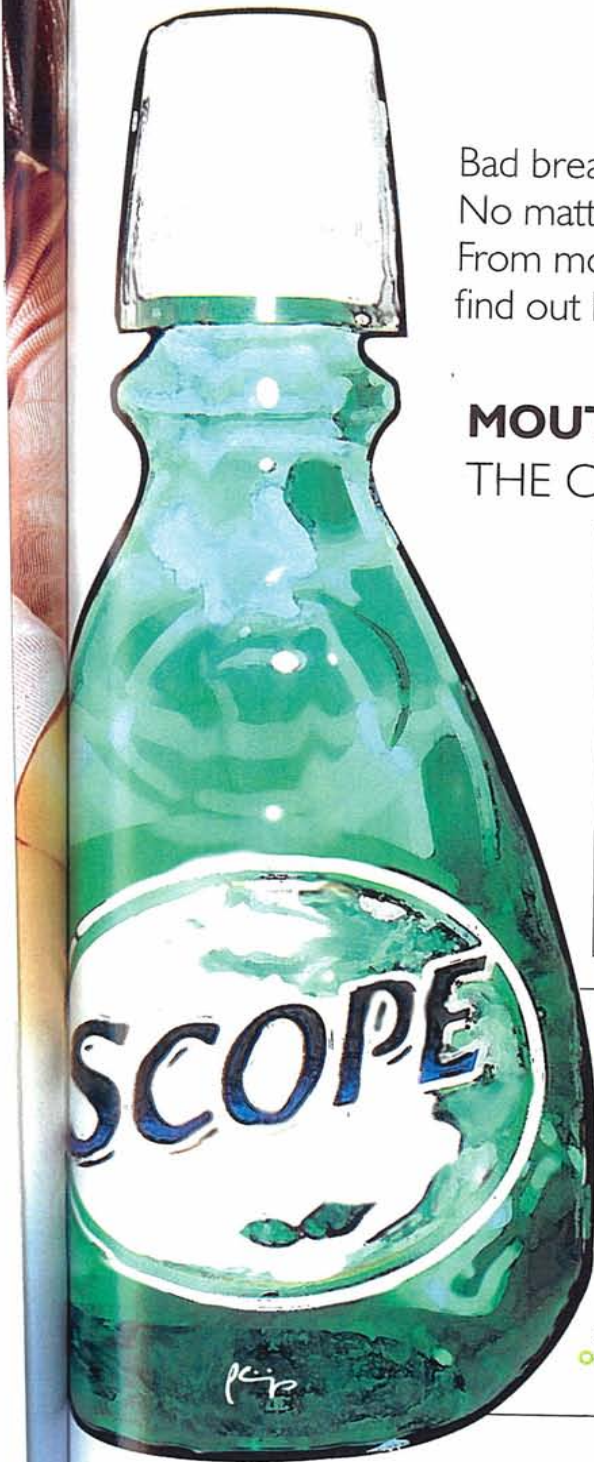
EFFICACY: Proven to kill bad-breath bacteria.

INGREDIENTS: Cetylpyridinium chloride, domiphen bromide and alcohol, which kill bacteria.

HOW TO USE: Rinse or gargle for 30 seconds as desired.

WE SAY: Tastes minty and fresh, leaving mouth feeling clean and smooth. Doesn't feel heavy-duty.

Original Mint Scope (500 mL), \$4



BY INGRIE WILLIAMS

ILLUSTRATION BY PHILIP ATTAR

A once in a while nuisance or a serious problem,

bad breath can negatively affect work and personal relationships, not to mention self-esteem. To further complicate matters, it's a condition that can be difficult to talk about, both for the person who suffers from it and for those who work or live with her. Thankfully, there are ways to minimize and prevent it from developing.

Anyone can suffer from halitosis, regardless of age, gender or race. The biggest cause of bad breath is bacteria, which is always present in the mouth to some degree. Other contributors include:

- strong or spicy foods, such as garlic, onions and coffee
- diseases and conditions (like diabetes, kidney failure or infected tonsils)
- alcohol
- tobacco
- dental problems (such as inflamed gums)
- poor nutrition
- stress (the body's ability to control bacteria is weakened)

breathalyzer

The old breathing-into-your-hand-and-smelling-it trick doesn't work, but licking your wrist can give you an indication of whether you need to refresh your breath. Using the broad part of your tongue, not just the tip, lick your inner wrist (where you would spray perfume). Allow the saliva to dry for a few seconds and then give it a sniff.

has been linked to periodontal disease." Bosy says that while everyone's case doesn't involve periodontal disease, it's still a risk to your system: "It's just not healthy to have bad breath."

dental do's

Maintaining proper dental care is an important component of the anti-halitosis regimen. "When people leave our clinic they have to be good at brushing and flossing because they need to be able to mechanically remove the bacteria. You can't just kill it with mouth rinses," says Bosy. However, that's not to say your favourite mouthwash isn't effective for everyday use. "If you don't have a serious problem and just want to freshen up your mouth, using a mouthwash is fine. Brushing, flossing and using a rinse will lower the amount of microbes in the mouth," she says.

taste test

According to Anne Bosy, research and clinical director of the Fresh Breath Clinic in Toronto (the only one of its kind in Canada, freshbreath.ca), "the number one complaint from people who suffer from bad breath is a bad taste in the mouth. People come to the clinic more for help about the taste than the odour. A bitter taste, for example, is an indicator of a high yeast content in the mouth which

the next generation

Fresh breath will never go out of style, but the way you go about getting it might.

FRESH BREATH ON THE GO

If you find the strength of original Listerine PocketPaks (24), \$3, overpowering, try the new Fresh Burst formula. It's milder tasting but offers the same germ-killing power. Each strip contains bacteria-fighting ingredients and dissolves instantly on your tongue.



A CLEANER MOUTH IN ONE STEP

Crest Plus Scope Flavour Liquid Gel Toothpaste, \$3, a new toothpaste-mouthwash combination, fights cavities and freshens your breath in one quick step.


odour busters

Here are some tips that can help reduce the chance of odours developing on a daily basis:

Nibble your garnish. Parsley is a natural deodorizer. "It's a healthy thing to do," Bosy says, "because it's packed with vitamins A and C. Just be sure to clean the little green bits out of your teeth!"

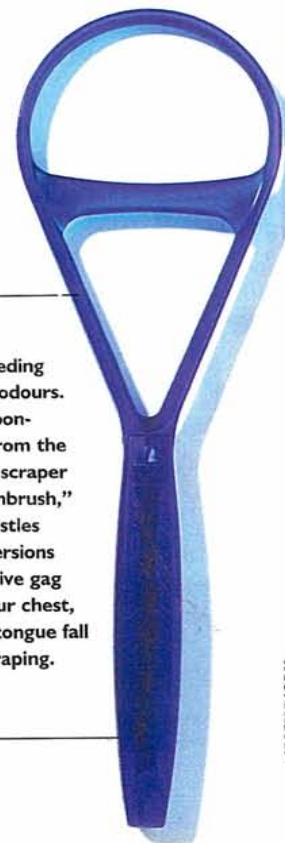
Drink up. Drinking water keeps your mouth moist, making it less prone to odours.

Show your tongue a little extra TLC by using a tongue cleaner. See Tongue Twister, below.

Chew sugar-free gum. It stimulates salivary flow and helps clean plaque off teeth – just don't get in the habit of chewing it all the time, warns Bosy. 

tonguetwister

Don't forget your tongue! It's a breeding ground for bacteria, which leads to odours. Tongue cleaners are plastic, flat, spoon-shaped tools that remove the film from the surface of the tongue. "The tongue scraper does a much better job than a toothbrush," says Bosy. Replace scrapers with bristles every three months – bristle-free versions last longer. **TIP:** If you have a sensitive gag reflex, try lowering your chin to your chest, relaxing your jaw and letting your tongue fall loosely from your mouth before scraping.



JEFFREY ROSS