



Fresh Breath Clinical
Director Anne Bosy

Bad breath fouls up careers

Stress levels and immune system may affect odour

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Forgetting to brush your teeth, skipping breakfast or depending on coffee and donuts religiously in the morning can be more detrimental to your career than leaving your presentation notes at home.

You see, you can always try winging the presentation - but if your breath stinks, guess what'll be the water-cooler topic for the day?

According to a survey done for Oral-B by Maritz Research, 44 per cent of Canadians cite bad breath as the "most offensive oral misdemeanor in the workplace" - and one in 10 say they would actually compromise their job by missing meetings in order to avoid speaking to colleagues with bad breath.

At the Fresh Breath Clinic, in the Yonge and St. Clair area, www.freshbreath.ca, clinical director Anne Bosy is leading research to see how breath odour is affected by such factors as stress levels at work, individual reactions to stress, immune system deficiencies and poor eating habits.

"One person might have a high reactivity to stress combined with a low immune response (which could lead to bad breath)," hypothesizes Bosy, "while someone else might have a low reactivity to stress combined with a high immune response resulting in good or better breath." The clinic also provides lunch-and-learn seminars with firms interested in nipping bad breath in the bud.

Missing breakfast, says Bosy, can lead to bad breath because the body turns to stored proteins and fats to manufacture energy. "This energy production has byproducts called ketones and these are excreted on the breath as well as through the kidneys as well," she says. "The pungent odour of ketones can be unbearable for those smelling it on your breath when you don't eat breakfast."

Many visitors to the Fresh Breath Clinic only realize they have a problem when someone at work tells them so, or when they've noticed people's body language when they'd talk in close proximity to them.

"We've had clients threatened with being terminated if they don't get their breath under control. Some clients begin to take on less responsibility at work, don't interact as much with colleagues, and aren't confident in sharing their ideas at meetings all because of their bad breath.

"Because of their breath problem they often become labelled as less hard-working and introverts which later impacts their promotion chances."