



# ORAL HEALTH

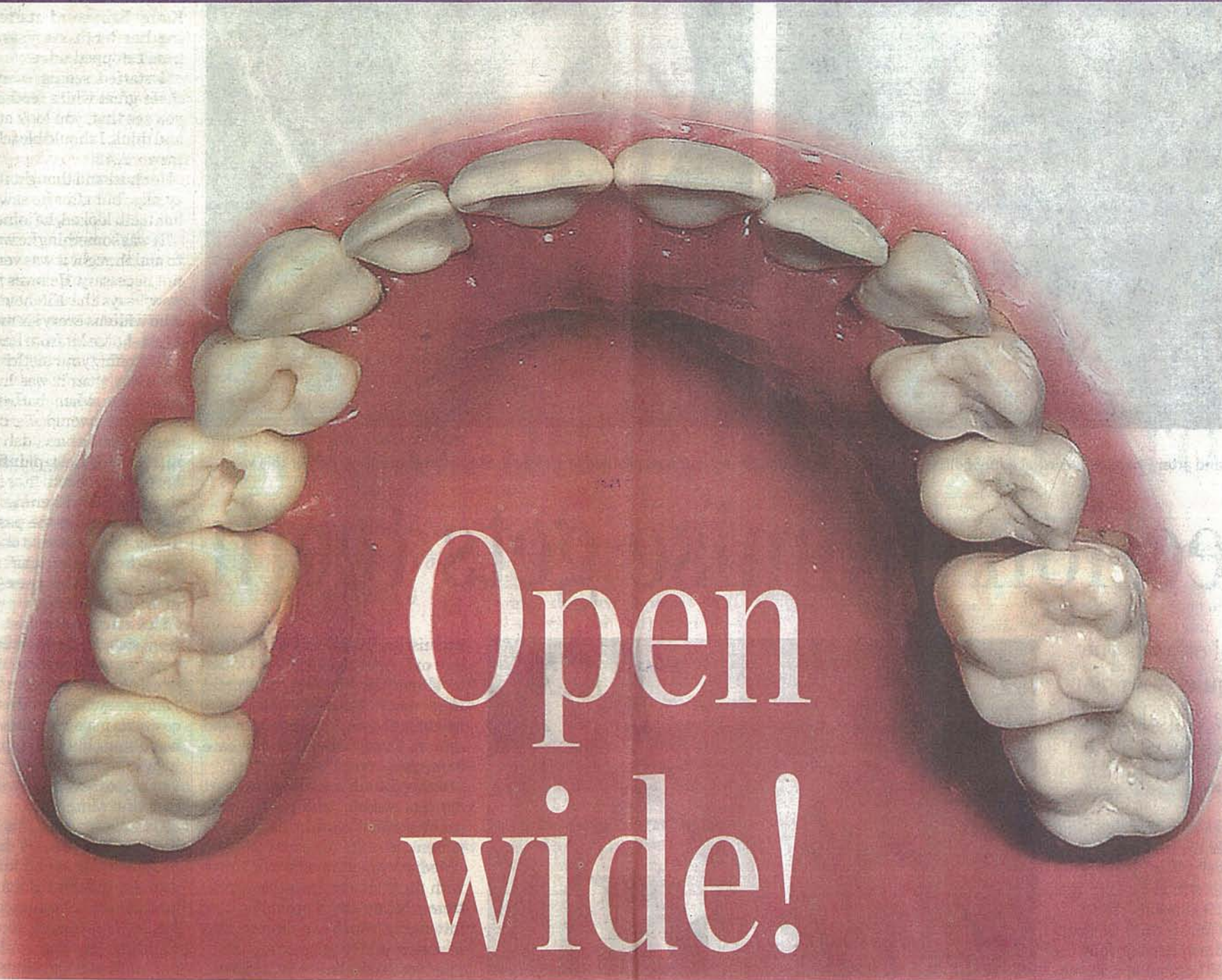


**BAD BREATH BUSTER**  
What to do when  
mints don't work  
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**FEAR FACTOR**  
TV, baking, fireplace  
put patients at ease  
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**FRESH START**  
Access to care  
changed his life  
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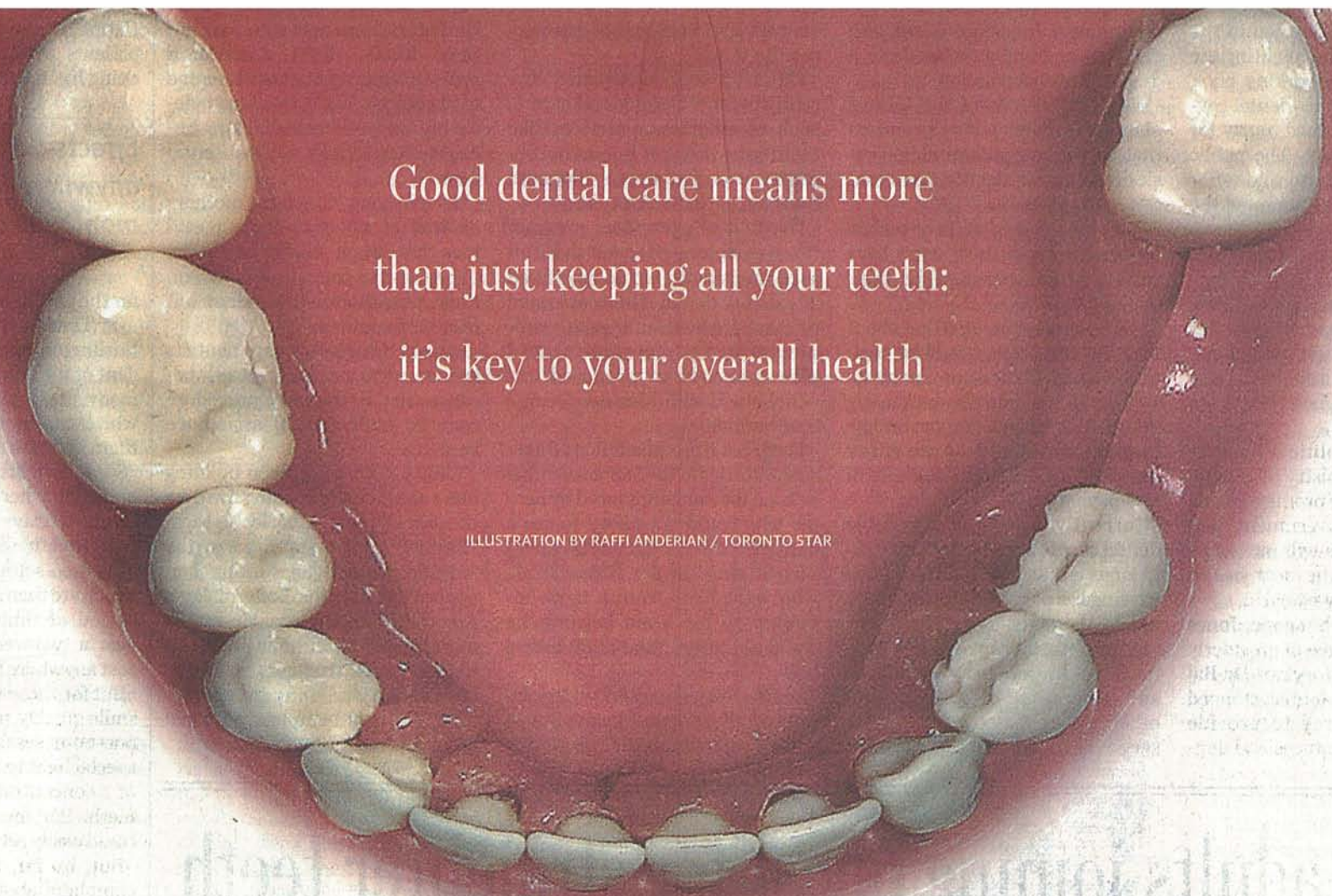
# Open wide!

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Good dental care means more  
than just keeping all your teeth:  
it's key to your overall health

ILLUSTRATION BY RAFFI ANDERIAN / TORONTO STAR





# Bad-breath clinic busts even the tough cases

**MIKE FUNSTON**  
STAFF REPORTER

Do you have the heartbreak of halitosis?

Having chronic bad breath really stinks, but Anne Bosy knows how to help.

This dental hygienist has a master of science degree specializing in oral malodour.

No kidding.

After running a breath clinic at the University of Toronto's faculty of dentistry for three years, she turned her expertise into the Fresh Breath Clinic in Toronto in 1993 and has been rescuing thousands of people from shame and embarrassment ever since.

People have flocked to her clinic

from 30 countries and at times almost 30 per cent of her patients have been from the U.S.

Almost everyone has bad breath from time to time, usually due to certain foods such as garlic and coffee, or jungle mouth in the morning. But it can usually be controlled with brushing, flossing and off-the-shelf mouthwashes.

But some people find themselves with chronic, foul-smelling breath, which can affect social and business relationships and their love lives.

"People have come to me for help, saying their spouse has told them to get rid of the bad breath or move in to the second bedroom," Bosy says.

Another showed up because her boss gave her an ultimatum: lose

the bad breath or lose the job.

"Some people are really distraught," Bosy says.

While there are various causes of halitosis, Bosy has found that high levels of bacteria, not necessarily bad hygiene or gum disease, are usually to blame.

Diet, stress, disease and other factors can cause these "indigenous bacteria" to multiply out of control in the mouth. The bad odour is actually caused by gases that are waste products of the bacteria, she says.

Patients are tested for the types of gases found in the mouth and for bacteria levels. Samples are analyzed by a staff immunologist. Medical history and diet are examined.

An individual program is prescribed that may involve using the clinic's proprietary antibacterial mouthwashes, along with proper brushing, flossing and tongue-scraping.

In rare cases, patients may have their urine tested for a rare genetic disorder (trimethylaminuria) that can cause the body to give off a fishy odour that can be mistaken for bad breath.

For the most part, solving a patient's breath problem "is easy, once we condition the mouth (to remove high bacteria levels) and put them on the proper maintenance program," Bosy says.

"If the problem returns, we just redo the treatment."



DAVID COOPER/TORONTO STAR

Anne Bosy and some of the tools of the trade used at her clinic, which has helped thousands with halitosis.

She believes genetics can play a role. Sometimes her clinic has treated entire families.

"We counsel everyone to eat good food, exercise as much as possible, drink water and really tackle their oral hygiene."

The clinic, co-founded by Dr. Julian Geller, a dentist, is located on Yonge St., north of St. Clair Ave.

## ORAL HYGIENE 101

**Brushing brush-up:** Brush for at least two minutes, front, back and on chewing surfaces. Tilt the brush at an angle. Brush gently, using short back-and-forth or circular strokes.

It only takes 20 minutes after a meal for harmful acids to attack your teeth. If you're out and don't have a toothbrush, rinse thoroughly with water.

Bacteria, fungi and viruses can survive on toothbrushes; replace yours every couple of months or after you've had a cold or flu.

**Get flossing:** If you don't floss at least once a day, in addition to brushing, you're not cleaning one-third of the surfaces of the teeth. Flossing helps fight the onset of gum disease and also helps remove a potential cause of bad breath — food particles stuck between teeth.

Wrap about a half a metre of floss around each of the middle fingers of your hands, leave a couple of inches in between and gently floss between the teeth using the thumbs. Slide up and down a few times, following the curves of the teeth and gently go above the gum line. Don't saw, as that can damage teeth.

**Swish away:** Mouthwashes can help control plaque and freshen breath, but should contain three essential oils: thymol, eucalyptol and menthol. More specialized mouthwashes — some requiring a prescription — may be recommended for specific problems such as chronic bad breath.

## BREATH TIPS FOR HOT DATES

Anne Bosy offers these tips to prevent temporary bad breath.

**Keep your teeth clean.** Take the time to properly brush your teeth and gums with toothpaste. Floss — the areas between your teeth harbour bacteria. Use unflavoured floss and smell each segment as you floss. If you find a smelly area, floss until the odour is gone.

**Keep your tongue clean.** The top of the tongue continually forms a coating of dead cells, food debris and bacteria. If the coating is allowed to thicken, it becomes a

primary cause of odour. Gently scrape using a tongue cleaner (available at pharmacies) until the coating is gone and rinse with water. Or brush a small quantity of mouthwash onto the tongue.

**Avoid problem foods.** If you have garlic, onions or curry, they'll be noticeable on your breath.

**Keep hydrated.** Sipping on mineral water or ice tea — best flavoured with lemon — will help keep your mouth fresh.

**Mask it.** Keep sugarless gum or mints on hand.