

New Halitosis Treatment Eliminates Bad Breath

by Scott F. Kenward, DMD

It is estimated that between 40 and 90 million Americans feel they suffer at least some degree of halitosis, commonly known as bad breath. Because our sense of smell has an incredible ability to adjust to odors, many people with halitosis aren't even aware of their problem breath. Up until recently even your dentist couldn't do a whole lot about it other than tell you to, "floss and brush more."

But now, thanks to a new technology (recently featured on the ABC News program 20/20), the real causes of bad breath can be identified and treated. And the good news is that the treatment is simple, quick and relatively inexpensive.

Types of Bad Breath

Transitory, or short-term bad breath is caused by foods like garlic and onions and generally only lasts from 1 to 3 days. No treatment is necessary.

About 10% of the time, persistent or *chronic* bad breath is actually caused by underlying medical conditions like diabetes, sinusitis or emphysema. If the patient has an internal problem, he or she is referred to the proper specialist.

Many people assume that their bad breath is the result of severe periodontal problems and sometimes they are right. But most of the time this isn't true. The pungent, "rotten egg" odor of chronic bad breath usually results when bacteria in the mouth and on the tongue cause the formation of what are called volatile sulphur compounds, or VSCs.

What About Mouthwash?

VSCs are the real cause of over 90% of bad breath cases and most over-the-counter mouthwashes will effectively mask these compounds for only a few hours, at best. What gets rid of them is a series of carefully administered chlorine dioxide treatments. Chlorine dioxide is a safe but very powerful agent that destroys the sulphur compounds in the mouth and eliminates bad breath in almost every case.

Although there is no permanent cure for most cases, long-term treatment for halitosis can be easy, convenient and effective. Successful treatment can occur in as little as 3 or 4 visits.

Ask your dentist how he or she can help you attain the fresh, clean breath you want and deserve.

Dr. Kenward is a dentist at 12651 South Dixie Highway in Pinecrest. His focus is on cosmetic and preventive dentistry. For more information call 305-255-7722.