

Take My (Bad) Breath Away



by William J. Schlotz, D.D.S.

When whispering sweet nothings in someone's ear here's some advice. Make sure your breath doesn't ruin the message. Breath fresheners and mouthwashes are all over the market place and making sense of them is a tad daunting. Here are some thoughts from your local dentist on the subject.

Run of the mill antiseptic mouthwashes (such as Scope or Listerine) usually contain alcohol... as they aim to wipe out bacteria. Short term effects of fresh/minty breath are noticeable. However, bacteria are prolific and return in numbers quickly. It won't be long before sourness returns.

A newer class of breath fresheners, called odor neutralizing agents (ONA), were designed and created to break down odor-filled gases emanating from the intestinal tract. These gases are chemically neutralized by the ONA active ingredient. When the chemical neutralization is complete, oxygen is released. It is this oxygen, then, that works on restricting the growth of the bacteria - which are not fond of oxygen.

One ingredient I would definitely look for in an ONA is ZINC - scientifically shown to be active against the bad-breath gases. This activity seems to last quite awhile (8 hrs). One Zinc specific rinse called Smart Mouth, is based in St. Louis and obtained through dental offices.

Studies involving saliva sniff testing, not a job I long for, appear positive at this point. Certainly, for the afflicted...ONAs are worth a try. Remember, however, persistent bad breath could be a sign of Periodontal Disease. This silent disease can ravage the bone structure that supports your teeth. Certainly a dental check-up, as always, would be wise.

*Dr. William J. Schlotz, DDS
Plaza Health Dentistry 314.843.0500
9420 Watson Road, Crestwood.
TheConservativeDentist.com*