

Script – Broadcast – Take my (bad) breath away

Intro

There are few things more embarrassing than halitosis – better known as bad breath. Whether it's that disturbing look on your significant other's face when you give them a smooch, or that unpleasant odor coming from that stranger chatting you up at a party, bad breath can cause a little anxiety for everyone involved.

Bad breath is common. One in four adults have had bad breath at some point in their lives. It can also be chronic. According to Breanne Gendron, a nurse practitioner with OSF HealthCare, some people don't even know they have bad breath due to a condition called Olfactory fatigue, which is when people lose their sensitivity to odors.

((SOT)) Breanne Gendron (BRE-ANN JEN-DRAN), nurse practitioner, OSF HealthCare

"Bad breath can be a totally benign thing, and you just need to brush more, or it could be a sign that something more serious is going on. If you are someone who has bad breath despite regular like twice daily brushing and flossing, then it would be important for you to see your dentist to make sure everything's healthy on the inside of your mouth." (:20)

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Bad breath can be caused by many things, but it all starts with good dental hygiene. In addition to brushing twice a day, flossing is also extremely important. While some people tend to blow off brushing their teeth before bedtime, Gendron says that's the most important time of the day. That's when cavities can form the easiest and we don't make as much saliva when we sleep. When your mouth is dry you wake up with the always dreaded "morning breath."

Gendron says the first call to make is to your dentist. Ongoing bad breath can be a sign of gum disease, which can be caused by genetics, plaque, or both. If your dentist doesn't find any problems such as cavities or gum disease — then your primary care physician can determine if another condition is causing the bad breath.

((SOT)) Breanne Gendron (BRE-ANN JEN-DRAN), nurse practitioner, OSF HealthCare

"We need to check the inside of the mouth first; if the dentist says everything looks good, you need to see your doctor to talk about other reasons for those issues." (:10)

TAG

The most obvious symptom of bad breath is, well, bad breath. But other problems include a white coating on the tongue, a dry mouth, or excess mucus in the back of the throat usually from nasal irritation, allergies, or a bacterial infection.

There are other reasons, of course, for bad breath. Smoking is one. But it's also the foods we eat such as garlic, onions and spicy foods.

For many of us who experience bad breath from time to time the old standby is to pop a mint or a piece of gum in your mouth. While that may help rid yourself of the smell, Gendron says that's just hiding a potential problem.

So, the next time someone tells you that your breath isn't up to snuff, take heed. It just might be the hint you need to get to the root of what's really causing that undesirable odor.