

Bacteria on the back of the tongue are the primary cause of bad breath

Lack of saliva flow can increase the growth of bad breath bacteria

Good oral hygiene, mouth sprays, and antibacterial rinses can help



85-90% of bad breath (halitosis) originates in the mouth from the growth of specific types of anaerobic bacteria. These bacteria release volatile sulphur compounds (VSC's) during their life cycle, resulting in bad breath.

The primary cause of the growth of these bad bacteria is oral dryness. When the mouth is dry, bad breath bacteria begin to grow, primarily on the back of the tongue.

Bad breath can also be caused by systemic diseases, but the incidence of such diseases being the primary cause of bad breath is infrequent.

- Many individuals do not know they have bad breath. Ask a trusted friend, family member, or confidant to help you identify if you have bad breath.
- Better oral hygiene, including brushing and flossing, and cleaning the tongue with your toothbrush or a tongue scraper may be helpful. Use an oxidizing mouth rinse to kill the bacteria. Keep your mouth moist by using breath sprays and gum to stimulate saliva flow.
- Avoid products that may cause oral dryness, such as oral rinses with alcohol.
- Medications may also cause oral dryness, see "[I have dry mouth](#)".
- If you have tried the above options and still have bad breath, talk to your dental professional about possible causes and other options for treatment.

