

According to Dr Harold Katz, a general dentist, "Harlequin Publishers, the Romance people, polled their readership last year about their romantic likes and dislikes. They discovered that the biggest turn off for both men and women towards the opposite sex was bad breath. Nothing came as close to instantly causing a person to become repellent to another, and there were some other pretty unappealing things on their list. When halitosis (the scientific name for bad breath) rears its ugly head people notice, and that's not good. Our sense of smell is very primal - it taps into rather primitive instinctual urges. For example when you smell baking cookies, you are usually reminded of positive childhood memories associated with your mom, freshly baked treats, home, safety, and love. That is probably why sneaky realtors will bake cookies at open houses - you start to think of their house as a place you could call your home.

Similarly, bad breath is also a very evocative smell. It smells of decay, rot, and infection. The odors in bad breath include such nasty chemicals as Hydrogen sulfide (the rotten egg smell), Cadaverine, and Putrescine. Our instincts associate these smells with danger and tell us to flee. We may find some character traits like poor posture or narcissism unattractive but nothing will actually cause you to retreat in genuine physical revulsion like halitosis. It's like the Godzilla of undesirable traits.

**SIX QUICK TIPS** to make sure bad breath is not a factor:

- 1. Saliva is nature's mouthwash.** A dry mouth is a smelly mouth. Make sure to drink plenty of water to keep the drool flowing. When your mouth makes less germ-killing saliva, germs flourish and your breath gets worse. So drink plenty of fluids to naturally clean your breath.
- 2. Take your time.** Brush for 2 minutes with a soft nylon bristled toothbrush. Rinse for 90 seconds. The active ingredients in mouthwash and toothpaste need time to be effective. And, if you happen to use an alcohol based mouthwash, before you panic about how much rinsing for 90 seconds can burn...
- 3. Don't use an alcohol based mouthwash that burns.** Recent studies have associated all sorts of serious long term health problems with mouthwash that contains alcohol. A recent study published in the Dental Journal of Australia said alcohol based mouthwashes "can cause oral cancer and should be removed from supermarket shelves." While testing in the US has not been as conclusive, one thing we do know is that alcohol in mouthwash definitely reduces saliva production. If you refer to tip #1 you will know this is bad. Less saliva means more halitosis. Look for oral rinse that is alcohol free and uses methods like oxygenation to kill germs without serious side effects,
- 4. Make sure to floss every day.** The stuff in between your teeth smells very unpleasant. Don't believe me? Go grab some floss, use it between a couple of your front teeth, then smell it. Go ahead - I will wait... If you haven't been flossing regularly I am sure you will agree that it is not an extremely pleasant smell. Oral bacteria create smelly odors by breaking down proteins in food particles the stuff in between your teeth is like a gourmet feast for germs. Make sure you floss between every tooth and then vigorously rinse with a good oral rinse to wash all that gunk out.
- 5. Brush your tongue.** With your toothbrush. Doing it with your hairbrush is gross. Germs live in the crevices of your tongue. The white or yellow coating that sometimes forms on you there is their collected waste. That bacteria waste is sulfurous and extremely stinky. Brush that stuff off before it makes your mouth extremely unpleasant to be around.

**6. Skip sugary mints.** They can cover bad breath for a few minutes but ultimately just feed the germs that produce odor. If you want a little breath pick me up try gum with Xylitol. Gum tends to increase saliva flow and the chewing can help to clean between teeth.”

Thanks, Dr Katz!!!

So, do you still wonder why your Valentine’s Day was so lonely? If so then maybe it is not halitosis that is causing your problem! I can’t help you with those “other” issues, but if it is halitosis just do what we tell you and at least your breath problems will be under control!