

Did you know that 50% of the bacteria in your mouth live on the surface of your tongue? Also, a tongue cleaning is the single most important step you can take toward diminishing bad breath.

We all know just how important brushing and flossing is to our oral health, and sometimes tongue scraping takes a seat behind these important steps. However, tongue scraping is just as important! The best way to rid you of bad breath is by scraping the smelly bacteria off. While scraping off tongue bacterium sounds somewhat gross, imagine all the bacteria just sitting on your tongue!

The tip of your tongue is less likely to harbor odor-producing bacteria since it constantly comes into contact with your hard palate when eating and speaking. The friction and contact creates a cleansing action that prevents debris build up. However, the back of your tongue only touches your soft palate, and results in a buildup of bacteria. Even if you stick out your tongue while looking in the mirror, you'll see white, or even a brown colors on the surface of the back of your tongue.

Brushing your tongue is better than not paying any attention to your tongue, but there are other much more effective ways to get your tongue to be squeaky-clean. If you do choose to use your toothbrush, gently move the toothbrush from back to front and along the sides. Try to brush as far back as possible to get all the gunk on the back of your tongue. Be careful, you might find that you have an active gag reflex, but don't worry there's a good chance it will diminish over time.

Another option is using a tongue scraper. Many people find that scraping the tongue is much more effective than brushing. You can either purchase a tongue scraper in the toothbrush aisle of your local drugstore, or even use a spoon from home! Just moisten the spoon, turn it upside down and place it at the back of your tongue and drive it forward. You'll notice that using a tongue scraper/spoon has less of a tendency to gag.

Daily tongue cleaning is a well-established practice in many cultures, however is much less spoken about in the US and Canada. Since cleaning your tongue is relatively easy and quick, we recommend that the tongue be cleaned both morning and evening. According to studies, practicing good tongue cleaning is especially good if you have significant stress, as tongue coating tends to increase during stress. In addition to your tongue cleaning, be sure to brush and floss your teeth daily!

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