

# Bad Breath — Tongue Cleaning

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Most people brush their teeth routinely. The value of this simple procedure is well known and accepted. Tooth brushing removes dental plaque – the slimy substance that accumulates on tooth surfaces and causes tooth decay and periodontal (gum) disease. Plaque contains millions of bacteria, but did you know your tongue is the home for far more organisms than those that reside in the dental plaque on your teeth?

The following little-known facts will update you on this challenge:

1. The taste buds on the tongue vary in length. Some people, about 50% of the population, have taste buds so long and dense that their tongues always have a gray, green, brown scum on them. The scum contains the same organisms that cause dental decay and gum disease.
2. About 50% of the population (those with long taste buds) need to clean their tongues as a daily routine.
3. It has been estimated that up to 90% of bad breath originates from organisms and debris on the surface of the tongue.

Decide if you need to clean your tongue. Stick it out. Is it pink? If so, cleaning is probably not necessary. Is it grey, orange, brown, or even black? You need to clean it.

Brushing the tongue removes some of the organisms, but there is a better, easier, and more effective tongue cleaning procedure. Use the tongue cleaner we will suggest. Place it as far back on the tongue as you can tolerate. Place about one pound of force and pull the tongue cleaner forward. Repeat the procedure until no more debris is present. One or two cleanings per day is normal, especially before bedtime. You will be on your way to a cleaner mouth, less dental disease, and better breath.