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Quit buggin' me! - why the bacteria you cultivate in your mouth matters to your oral and dental health.



This article explains germs in the mouth and how probiotics may help.

Main ideas

- Bad germs cause most tooth decay and gum disease.
- Germs pass between people through saliva, for example by sharing cups or toothbrushes, or kissing.
- To fix a mouth with lots of bad germs: have a professional clean, and maybe a strong mouthwash for a **short** time. Long-term use can dry the mouth and cause other problems.
- Then help good germs grow.

Words to know

- **Prebiotics:** food for good germs, like high-fibre foods, apples, onions, greens and cheese.
- **Probiotics:** good germs that may help keep bad germs away.

- **Postbiotics:** useful things made by germs that may help lower acid and decay.

Research says probiotics **may** help with bad germs, bad breath and sore gums. They are not a magic fix. Examples in Australia are Oh My Gob and Biome Dental Probiotic.

4 steps to a healthy mouth

1. Lower bad germs with a professional clean, then encourage good germs.
2. Eat cheese and high-fibre fruit and vegetables.
3. Brush, clean between teeth and clean your tongue. Do not use germ-killing mouthwash for a long time unless your dental professional says to.
4. Drink water, breathe through your nose if you can, and have less sugar and acid.