



Newsletter Articles

What do you mean you don't clean your tongue?



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Lick it, taste it, kiss it, say it, stick it, swallow it, breathe it – (inspo cred goes to Daft Punk #technologic) ...but today we're talking about that diverse tongue of yours! Your tongue is a multifunctional organ involved in taste perception, digestion, speech, and overall oral and sensory experiences.

Can you touch your nose with the tip of your tongue? Are you trying it now? ...I digress.

Anatomically, the tongue's rough and irregular surface provides an ideal environment for bacteria to adhere to and multiply. This is due to the different types of lingual papillae (taste buds) that cover the surface of the tongue and look like small, finger-like projections – giving the tongue its textured appearance. While the accumulation of bacteria on the tongue is a natural part of oral flora – and not all bacteria are considered harmful – the rough surface created by lingual papillae can ultimately trap food particles, plaque, and various bacterial species.

If we are not regularly and effectively removing this debris that sits on and hides within the surface of the tongue, it can lead to a range of issues.

An unclean tongue contributes to halitosis (bad breath). So, forget about the saying “you don’t make friends with salad”, because halitosis is the real social repellent here. Masking bad breath may be temporarily possible with chewing gum, mints, and mouthwash, but it is merely a band-aid solution without actually cleaning the tongue first. It’s on par with spraying on deodorant after a 12-hour shift, when you should really be taking a shower! You can properly control, reduce, and dare I say eliminate bad breath with proper tongue cleaning – using a tongue cleaner [[link tongue cleaners](#)], in conjunction with other aids [[link for mouthwashes etc](#)] to maintain a healthy bacterial load. Cleaning the tongue will also prevent oral infections such as oral thrush (a fungal infection), geographic tongue (a benign condition characterised by irregular patches on the tongue), and hairy tongue (a build-up of dead skin cells characterised by a dark and furry appearance). Moreover, as oral bacteria generally spread between hard and soft tissues through saliva, removing bacteria from the tongue can help in the prevention of gum disease and tooth decay.

From a systemic standpoint, by removing harmful bacteria and toxins on the tongue, you can reduce the potential for these bacteria to enter the bloodstream and negatively affect other parts of the body. Similarly, research suggests a link between oral health, including tongue cleanliness, and heart health – where reducing oral bacteria may help lower the risk of cardiovascular problems.

Oh, and most importantly (spoken like a true foodie), a clean tongue allows your taste buds to function at an optimal level. Who wouldn’t want to enhance their ability to taste and enjoy food?

So remember, ‘oral hygiene’ refers to your teeth, gums AND tongue. Tongue cleaning should be a regular part of your oral hygiene routine, ideally done twice a day (along with tooth brushing and flossing).

Our tongue does a lot for us, so let’s give it a bit more TLC.

Takeaway Points:

- The tongue is a multifunctional organ involved in taste perception, digestion, speech, and overall oral and sensory experiences.
- The tongue's rough and irregular surface (from taste buds) provides an ideal environment for bacteria to adhere to and multiply.
- Regularly cleaning the tongue will reduce bad breath; help in the prevention of gum disease and tooth decay; prevent oral infections like oral thrush, hairy tongue, and geographic tongue; and may help lower the risk of cardiovascular problems.
- An 'oral hygiene routine' consists of three parts: tooth brushing, flossing, and tongue cleaning.

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