

Antibacterial Toothpaste and Tongue Scraping Eliminate Halitosis

The stigma and embarrassment associated with chronic bad breath, or halitosis, can be sufficient to turn sufferers into near-hermits. One in four adults has halitosis, statistics show, and the percentage may be as high as 50 percent in older adults.

A study conducted by dental researchers at the University at Buffalo has confirmed that brushing twice a day with toothpaste containing a bactericide and using a toothbrush with a tongue cleaner can eliminate halitosis, easing social strain and protecting teeth and gums in the process.

Results of the study were presented last week at the 2008 American Association for Dental Research in Dallas, Texas.

"All 14 subjects enrolled in this clinical study, all of whom had halitosis when they entered, had eliminated their halitosis at the end of the 28-day intervention," said Peter Moses, a dental student in the UB School of Dental Medicine and first author on the study.

"The fear of halitosis, known as halitophobia, sometimes is so great that up to 25 percent of people claiming to have halitosis actually don't," he said. "Halitophobia is associated with obsessive compulsive disorders and even has resulted in suicide, so there is a need for effective treatments for this condition."

The toothpaste used in the study contained triclosan, an antibacterial agent used in acne medications, hand soaps, detergents and deodorants. At the beginning of the study, participants were tested for halitosis and the presence of halitosis-causing oral bacteria using standard methods. The researchers collected tongue scrapings from study participants when they entered the study and at the end of the intervention. The tongue scrapings were analyzed for the presence of 20 bacterial species associated with halitosis.

Participants were instructed to brush twice a day with the triclosan toothpaste and to use a tongue cleaner throughout the trial.

At the end of the 28-day trial, results showed that mouth air levels of odiferous sulfur-containing compounds dropped from an average score of slightly more than 400 parts-per-billion at baseline to an average of 100 parts-per-billion at the end of the study. Analysis of the microbial samples showed significant decreases in numbers of halitosis-causing bacteria after 28 days.

"All participants eliminated their halitosis after using this triclosan-containing toothpaste and a tongue cleaner," said Moses.

Also contributing to the research from UB were Betsey Clark, a dental student; Violet I. Haraszthy, D.D.S., Ph.D., UB associate professor of restorative dentistry; and Joseph J. Zambon, D.D.S., Ph.D., professor of periodontology and oral biology and associate dean for academic affairs in the UB dental school.

Source: University at Buffalo

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