

DENTAL HEALTH

Is Your Mouth Clean?

(NAPSA)—Surprisingly, many Americans cannot tell whether or not their mouths are clean. Many people try cupping their hands to their nose and exhaling, but this do-it-yourself test simply doesn't work.

Why?

The body becomes accustomed to its own odors and as a result, it becomes hard for you to tell if your breath is offensive.

Consequently, the most effective way to check is simply ask a friend or family member.

So what gives breath its foul odor? Much of it is caused by germs in the mouth—microorganisms that feed on bits of food left on our teeth and tongue after meals. Feasting on these “leftovers,” the bacteria produce sulfur compounds which give breath its foul smell.

Not surprisingly, the public is constantly bombarded with the latest breath-freshening mints and gums. The surest way to obtain a clean mouth feeling is to kill those germs in the mouth. This may account for the popularity of a new, discreet, portable product called Cool Mint Listerine PocketPaks strips that doesn't mask bad breath but has been proven in laboratory tests to kill 99.9 percent of odor-causing bacteria in the mouth within 30 seconds. Listerine PocketPaks are film strips about the size of a postage



The tongue is the major source of malodor—80 to 90 percent of malodor originates in the mouth.

stamp, and according to clinical studies, control bad breath for up to 90 minutes.

Today, regardless of what may be the cause, good oral hygiene is essential in helping to provide a clean mouth feeling. That means brushing twice a day, cleaning between your teeth daily with floss or interdental cleaners and may also include rinsing twice a day with an antiseptic mouthwash.

Meanwhile, keep brushing, and don't rush through it. It takes about two minutes to adequately brush your teeth. Most people spend less than 40 seconds at it.