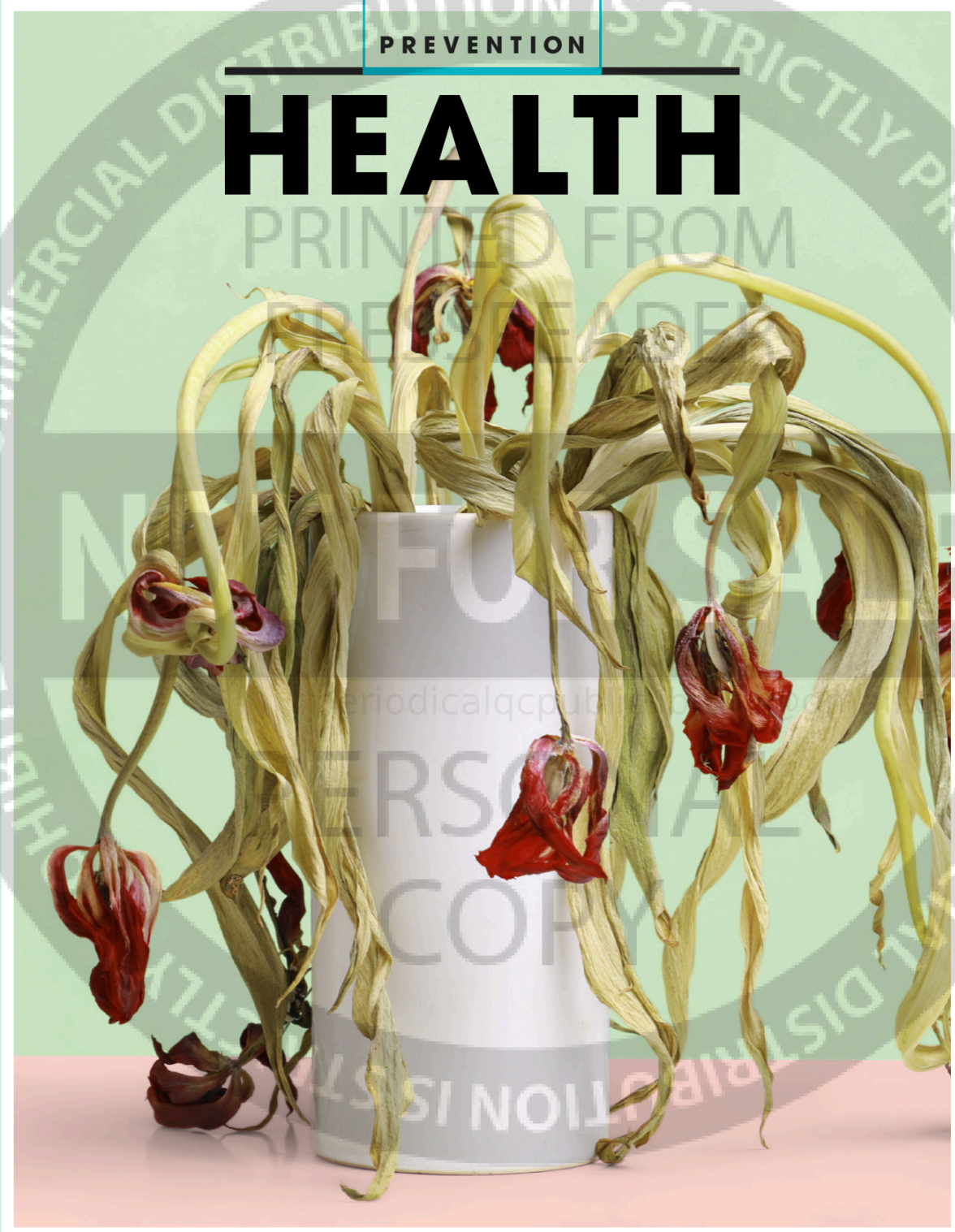


- Bad breath



PREVENTION

# HEALTH

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WHAT'S UP WITH ...

## BAD BREATH

If everything (and everyone) starts to wilt when you open your mouth, here's how to freshen things up.

BY KAYLA BLANTON

STOCKSY.

**M**ORNING BREATH IS one thing, but when the odor lingers even after you brush your teeth or pop a few mints, there may be something else going on.

**WHY THE STINK?**

“Many things can lead to bad breath—a.k.a. halitosis—from the foods you eat to the bacteria in your mouth and digestive system,” explains Jossen Gastelum, D.M.D., a general and cosmetic dentist in Scottsdale, AZ, and a TheraBreath partner. Some common causes:

■ **POOR ORAL HYGIENE** “If you’re not brushing and flossing regularly, food particles may remain in your mouth, promoting bacterial growth, which produces foul-smelling sulfur compounds,” says Ilona Casellini, D.M.D., a dentist at Swiss Quality Smile in Los Angeles. This can

lead to cavities, infections, and gum disease, which may make breath even worse.

■ **DRY MOUTH** “When there isn’t enough saliva, bacteria can’t be flushed away from the teeth,” says Casellini.

■ **DENTURES, RETAINERS, OR BRACES** If these appliances aren’t kept squeaky-clean, they can trap food particles and bacteria, leading to bad breath.

■ **SMOKING** Both cigarettes and chewing tobacco can leave an unpleasant odor in the mouth and contribute to odor-causing gum disease, Casellini says.

**How to make your breath sweeter**

▶ **GET DENTAL CHECKUPS:**

“Regularly scheduled cleanings and good oral hygiene at home are the easiest ways to prevent bad breath,” says Gastelum. Your dentist can check for and treat gum disease and other dental infections.

▶ **RINSE AND SPIT:**

In addition to brushing and flossing regularly, rinse with an alcohol-free mouthwash.

▶ **TREAT DRY MOUTH:**

Special rinses, sprays, and gels can stimulate saliva flow to lubricate the mouth and neutralize acids. Casellini recommends products from Biotene.

**WHEN IT MAY BE MORE SERIOUS**

If you still have issues after upping your oral-hygiene game, see a doctor. Various gastrointestinal issues can cause bad breath, and “severe gum disease is linked to several underlying health conditions, including Alzheimer’s, heart disease, and diabetes,” says Gastelum.