

## Check Your Breath

Have you ever tried to check your breath by breathing into your hand? Most of us have done this but it is not a true test. When we breathe we do not use our throat the same way as when you talk. Talking brings out odors from our mouth, where most bad breath starts. If we do not brush and floss daily, odor-producing bacteria accumulate on food left between our teeth, around our gums and on our tongue. The sulfur compounds released by these bacteria make our breath smell bad. Here are some tips you can share with your teen:

- Brush all the surfaces of your teeth for at least 2 minutes twice a day.
- Include brushing your tongue where bacteria love to hang out.
- Floss daily to clean between your teeth and gums where a toothbrush cannot reach.
- Choose an antibacterial mouth rinse to supplement your daily cleaning.
- Drink water to stay hydrated and wash away food particles that cause bad breath.



Common causes of bad breath include:

- Foods like garlic and onions. These enter our bloodstream after digestion and are carried to our lungs and breathed out.
- Smoking and using oral tobacco products. Not only does their use produce bad breath, tobacco products can cause tooth decay and gum disease, both of which also lead to bad breath.
- Having a dry mouth with no saliva to wash away food particles. Causes of dry mouth include mouth breathing during sleeping or when stuffed up with a cold, smoking and some prescription medications.
- Medical conditions like respiratory infections, diabetes, liver and kidney disease can also cause bad breath.

With summer approaching, most of us spend at least a little time in the sun every day. You may know someone that works outdoors, and others who use indoor tanning equipment. The fact is that ultraviolet radiation from both the sun and indoor tanning is linked to not only skin cancers, but also many other health risks including eye damage, a weakened immune system and an increased risk of other types of cancer. Protect yourself and your family at home, at work and at play. For more information visit: [albertapreventscancer.ca/reduce-your-risk/limit-uv-rays/](http://albertapreventscancer.ca/reduce-your-risk/limit-uv-rays/)

## Seeing Through the Vapour

Across Canada, 20 percent of youth between the ages of 15 and 19 report having tried e-cigarettes. A tobacco-like product emerging in popularity, e-cigarettes are battery-operated devices that have cartridges with liquid chemicals in them. Heat from a battery powered atomizer turns the chemicals into vapour that's inhaled, which is commonly referred to as vaping. There are no standards or labeling requirements for vapes. This makes it hard to know exactly what is in the liquid. Because chemicals in the cartridges can vary, it's hard to know what users and people nearby are breathing in. What we do know is vapour has been found to have toxic chemicals and cancer causing agents. And even though it is illegal in Canada to sell vapes or liquids that have nicotine, tests done by Health Canada found about half of vape liquids that were labeled "nicotine-free" actually contained nicotine.

What do parents need to know?

- Nicotine can affect brain development in teens. Teaching your teen the negative effects early could make the difference.
- Some e-cigarettes have candy flavouring, which could make them appealing to someone who has not smoked before, especially teens.
- E-cigarettes don't leave a smell like tobacco so it's going to be harder to know if your teen is vaping.

What can parents do?

- Be clear that smoking of any kind is off limits.
- Educate your kids that e-cigarettes may contain nicotine which is highly addictive.
- Learn as much as you can about e-cigarettes and know what they look like.
- Watch for signs of use, such as dry cough, as well as mouth and throat irritation.

For more information and support, visit [albertaquits.ca](http://albertaquits.ca) or call toll free 1-866-710-QUIT (7848).