

## The Oral Health Tool You Should be Using and Why

*Tongue tools can help improve bad breath, as well as overall oral health*

**SEATTLE – March 6, 2024** – Bad breath got you down? This hack will change your life: tongue scraping.

Scraping your tongue after you brush your teeth helps remove harmful bacteria which can inflame your gums and cause cavities and bad breath. Some types of bacteria that are responsible for bad breath can survive without oxygen and are commonly found in the tongue's grooves and cracks, which makes cleaning your tongue even more important.

“Bacteria on the tongue is common cause of bad breath,” said Nadia M. Fugate, DMD, Delta Dental of Washington's Senior Dental Consultant. “While bad breath can be embarrassing, the underlying causes can lead to health complications – both oral and overall. Using a tongue scraper or even your toothbrush is a great tool to help combat bacteria buildup on your tongue.”

Healthy tongues are a fleshy, pink color. If you don't take care of your tongue, it can become inflamed which can turn it white, yellow, or even black. Inflammation in your mouth can also lead to further health complications, including gum disease, cavities, and heart disease.

To clean your tongue using a scraper, rinse your hardware because scraping without moisture can damage your tongue. Then open your mouth wide and stick your tongue out, gently scraping from back to front, eventually building toward a firm scrape. In between scraping different sections, wash your scraper off and finish by rinsing out your mouth with anti-bacterial mouthwash.

### **Tongue scraping best practices**

- Never scrape from front to back
- Scrape the sides of your tongue
- Firm pressure will remove the most bacteria
- Don't scrape more than twice a day
- Avoid scraping if you notice pain or irritation on your tongue
- Always talk to your dentist about adding anything new to your routine

If you find yourself traveling or are in between scrapers, you can use your toothbrush in a pinch by brushing your tongue's surface after you are done brushing your teeth. Make sure to rinse your toothbrush off in between brushing your teeth and tongue.

For more information about your oral health, visit Delta Dental of Washington's [blog](#).

**[About Delta Dental of Washington](#)**

Founded 70 years ago by Seattle area dentists who set out to revolutionize oral health care, an innovative program was developed to provide longshoremen's children access to dental care – and the concept of dental benefits was born. Today [Delta Dental of Washington](#), a not-for-profit, is the state's leading dental benefits provider covering nearly 4 million people statewide and beyond.

Through corporate philanthropy, oral health advocacy, and funding the [Arcora Foundation](#), Delta Dental of Washington plays a vital role in making dental care more equitable and accessible, increasing dental health education with an emphasis on youth, and expanding diversity at all levels within the dental profession. These collective efforts aim to improve oral health care in Washington so all people can enjoy good oral and overall health with no one left behind. Delta Dental of Washington is part of the Delta Dental Plans Association, consisting of 39 independent, affiliated member companies. For more information, visit: [www.deltadentalwa.com](http://www.deltadentalwa.com).

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