

Healthy You

FAST FACTS FOR YOUR HEALTH

Q&A with Dr. Chad: Pinkeye

It's not a good way to start your day: You wake up with your eyelids swollen and glued shut by a sticky, pus-like substance. If you've never had this happen, it could be alarming. But if you have experienced this rude awakening, you will quickly recognize these symptoms as telltale signs of pinkeye.

Many families with young kids are especially susceptible to pinkeye (it spreads easily in daycare centers and schools). On the bright side, pinkeye rarely permanently harms vision, though it can be uncomfortable for a few days.

Dr. Chad Overman, Delta Dental of Iowa's director of vision benefits, shares his insight on this highly contagious and common eye infection so your family will be prepared the next time pinkeye strikes.

Q: What is pinkeye? What causes it?

Dr. Overman: Pinkeye, which your doctor may call conjunctivitis, is an infection that causes the thin layer of tissue above the whites of your eyes and inside the eyelid to become inflamed. Pinkeye can be caused by either a virus or bacteria, and it's highly contagious. One way you can tell if your pinkeye is caused by a virus or bacteria is by the symptoms. Pinkeye occurs when the whites of your eyes become pink or reddish, but when there's a watery discharge, that's a strong sign that your pinkeye is viral. If the discharge is white, yellow or green, that's likely bacterial pinkeye.

Q: What should I do if I have pinkeye? What's the best way to prevent spreading it to others?

Dr. Overman: Staying away from others is key to not spreading pinkeye, but because it's so contagious, that can be difficult amongst family members. Washing hands regularly and disinfecting everything an infected person has come in contact with will help limit the spread.

Q: What are the treatments for pinkeye? Do I need to see a doctor to get treatment for pinkeye? Or will it just go away on its own?

Dr. Overman: Pinkeye treatments depend on whether your pinkeye is viral or bacterial. Viral pinkeye really has no treatment, so going to the doctor will not do much but confirm the diagnosis. Like any virus, it just needs to run its course. If you have colored discharge coming from your eyes, it is likely bacterial, so a doctor may prescribe antibiotics to get rid of the infection. Regardless if it's viral or bacterial, pinkeye usually goes away in 4-7 days.

Q: What are some hygiene-related things I need to do to recover from pinkeye?

Dr. Overman: If you wear contacts, avoid using your contacts and wear glasses instead. Also, throw away the contact lenses you were wearing when you discovered pinkeye and disinfect the contact lens case. People with pinkeye should avoid touching their eyes other than to clean their infected eye(s) with a washcloth. Keeping your hands away from your eyes will greatly help reduce the spread of infection. Wash your hands regularly, disinfect doorknobs, sinks, counters, phones, computers, tablets, sheets, towels and anything else with which you've had close contact.

Q: When can I return to school or work after having pinkeye?

Dr. Overman: The safe choice is to give it a full 24 hours after symptoms are gone to go back to school or work.

Q: What's the best way to prevent getting pinkeye?

Dr. Overman: Good hygiene will help limit your chances of getting pinkeye, so washing your hands is important. Also, if you wear contacts, wear them as directed (in other words, if they need to be replaced every 2 weeks, don't wear them for 2 months). Of course, staying away from people who have an active pinkeye infection will reduce the chances it spreads to you.

Keto Diet and Oral Health: What You Need to Know

If you haven't tried the ketogenic (or keto) diet, you probably know someone who has. People have flocked to this low-carb, high-fat lifestyle to lose weight, but like any diet, it's not perfect. In fact, some people who've switched to a keto diet have struggled with "keto breath" — that is, bad breath as a result of beginning the keto diet.

Here, we'll learn more about this strange side effect, in addition to what you need to know about the keto diet for your oral and overall health.

Keto in a Nutshell

In short, the keto diet is designed to put your body in a state of ketosis. When you're in ketosis, your body burns fat for energy instead of glucose (the sugar that comes from carbohydrates), so you lose weight. How do you achieve ketosis? By eating a high-fat, moderate-protein and low-carbohydrate diet.

Keto and Bad Breath: A Closer Look at the Connection

A lot of things happen when your body shifts to a ketosis state. Your body produces chemicals during ketosis that are released from your body when you exhale and urinate. For some people who start the keto diet, they may notice that these chemicals create a strange, metal taste in their mouth and a smell that is fruity or harshly chemical (like nail polish remover). This side effect is known as keto breath.

As with any major dietary change, your body undergoes a transition or adjustment period. Although this period can be challenging, it is temporary. Keto breath is part of this transition, so your breath should get back to normal within a few weeks as your body gets used to working with a limited carbohydrate supply.

As you wait for your body to adjust to the ketosis state, here are some simple, keto-friendly ways to freshen your breath:

- Drink water
- Reduce your protein and boost your complex carbohydrate intake (leafy green veggies can help improve your breath)
- Pop a sugar-free mint or stick of sugar-free gum
- Clove, cinnamon and mint can all naturally freshen your breath. Add some to your water or in a cup of tea.

Can the Keto Diet Help Your Oral Health?

Keto breath aside, the keto diet may support your oral health. The diet reduces your intake of carbohydrates and processed sugar, and this leads to a lower risk of cavities, gum disease and inflammation in your mouth.

Potential Drawbacks to the Keto Diet

There is no such thing as a “perfect” way to eat, and there are some potential drawbacks to the keto diet. Here are some important things to understand about the keto diet. These may be great conversation starters for you and your dentist and physician when considering whether to pursue this diet:

- Keto is a high-fat diet, and research shows that eating a diet high in saturated fats can raise your cholesterol and risk of heart disease. The diet has been associated with heart damage, so if you have cardiovascular risk factors, this is an especially important consideration.
- One of the risks related to reducing carbs is the reduction of certain vitamins and nutrients that support good health, and fiber is a key one. You’ll need to have a plan on how to maintain your fiber intake while keeping within the parameters of the diet.
- The keto diet can make you feel fatigued, trigger headaches and digestive issues, and reduce muscle mass.

One Quick Tip Before You Start Any Diet

It seems like everyone, at one point or another, goes on a diet or makes changes to the way they eat. It may seem like no big deal, but it’s a good idea to give your almonds to ensure you get a healthy intake of this important nutrient.

Overall, the keto diet has been shown to help people lose weight, lower their sugar consumption and improve health. Temporary bad breath aside and assuming you don't have any medical risk factors, this diet is one that your dentist may support.

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<https://www.healthline.com/health/keto-breath>