

Men'sHealth

THE STYLE SIREN



## The Truth about Mouthwash

If you're like me, a swish of mouthwash is the last step in your morning oral hygiene routine. It adds that final blast of freshness and helps wash away any remaining bits scrubbed off from the toothbrush. But with new products launching every few months—each with increasing claims about the benefits—I've been wondering if there's any limit to what a mouthwash can actually do. Last month the FDA issued warning letters to three mouthwash companies asking that they discontinue making unproven claims that their rinses remove plaque above the gum line or promote healthy gums. I asked Beverly Hills-based dentist Dr. Arthur Glosman for his two cents. Here's what mouthwashes can realistically do:

**Rinse away grit:** Mouthwashes should still be a daily part of your dental health routine. They can remove food particles (which can contain harmful bacteria) from the mouth after brushing and flossing. [Click here for the best oral care products for men.](#)

**Battle bad breath:** Mouthwashes can fight bad breath by both masking the odor and by removing the food and bacteria in the mouth. It can also remove harmful food particles and mucus from the throat that cause bad breath.

**Help you maintain balance:** Pay attention to the alcohol content (Chlorhexidine—a common antiseptic) in mouthwash. Although it can provide a nice tingling feeling of freshness, it can upset your natural pH balance, leaving your mouth feeling dry. When this happens, your mouth is more likely to harbor harmful bacteria, which can lead to dental disease.

**Protect your teeth:** Look for mouthwash with peroxide and fluoride. The former will help you maintain white teeth, and the latter will help prevent cavities.

[For more answers to your oral hygiene questions, read "Ask the Tooth Expert."](#)

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