

## Benefits of Using a Tongue Scraper

- Clears toxins & bacteria from the tongue
- Helps remove coating on the tongue that leads to bad breath
- Helps eliminate undigested food particles from the tongue
- Enhances the sense of taste
- Promotes overall oral & digestive health
- Gently stimulates the internal organs
- Increases your awareness of your state of health

## For Oral Hygiene and Fresh Breath

Oral hygiene and fresh breath are understandably very high on the priority list for many people. Halitosis (or bad breath) is in fact a condition that can have a tremendously negative impact on a person's life, relationships, and self-esteem. And while bad breath is a very real problem for many, millions of others suffer from a crippling fear of having bad breath, even when they don't.<sup>2</sup>

In some cases, bad breath is the result of some sort of periodontal problem and it is therefore a good idea to see your physician or dentist if you have recently developed halitosis. Current research indicates that most cases of halitosis (85-90% of them) are a result of the metabolic outputs of naturally occurring bacteria inside the mouth, typically occupying the very back of the tongue.<sup>3</sup> This region of the tongue provides a particularly hospitable environment for many anaerobic bacteria because it is relatively undisturbed by normal activity in the mouth, it is drier than other parts of the mouth, it tends to be poorly cleansed, and it often harbors a number of substances on which the bacteria feed—tiny remnants of food, dead epithelial cells, and postnasal drip, to name a few. These same bacteria have been implemented as players in periodontal problems, accumulation of plaque, tooth decay, gum ailments, and there is mounting evidence that these bacteria are also linked to several systemic pathologies.<sup>1</sup>

So let's kill the bacteria, right? Well, not so fast. These bacteria are a necessary part of our natural flora and, when in balance, they actually help to protect against other potential issues.<sup>2</sup> But, it's true that good oral hygiene can help keep bacteria in check so that they can serve their purpose without wreaking havoc. Many people brush their tongues with toothbrushes and believe this to be sufficient, but a toothbrush is designed to clean the solid, unmoving structure of the teeth, not the spongy, flexible surface of the tongue. Using a tongue scraper to scrape the tongue gently dislodges bacteria as well as their food source and is therefore one of the most effective means of combating tongue bacteria. Clinical studies have shown that the daily use of a tongue scraper results in a significant reduction in the anaerobic bacteria that cause bad breath and other problems.

# For Improving Digestion, Taste, and the Health of Internal Organs

Amazingly, the benefits of using a tongue scraper reach far beyond the bounds of oral hygiene and fresh breath. In Ayurveda, proper digestion is the cornerstone of health; it is literally the process by which our daily intake of food nourishes our tissues and ultimately, our state of consciousness. Healthy digestion also protects the body against the accumulation of toxins and ensures the proper elimination of wastes.<sup>5</sup> Cleansing the tongue enhances the sense of taste, and because digestion begins with taste, this alone supports the entire digestive process. Additionally, different parts of the tongue are related to the lungs, the heart, the stomach, the liver, the spleen, the kidneys, and the intestines. A coating on the tongue indicates the presence of toxins, which are an impediment to proper digestion. A tongue scraper gently removes these toxins from the tongue itself and simultaneously stimulates, massages, and cleanses the associated organs and deep tissues.<sup>6</sup>

## For Gauging Your Overall Health

Many systems of medicine, including Ayurveda, use tongue diagnosis as a window into the internal workings of the body. Because the tongue reflects the health of so many vital organs, systemic imbalances (and improvements) are reflected on the surface of the tongue. Using a tongue scraper daily allows you to take note of any significant changes that may indicate variations in your own internal state of balance.

## How Do I Know If I Have Toxins?

Our bodies are constantly exposed to toxins from our food, beverages, and the environment; even unresolved emotions can lead to toxicity. When toxins are not properly digested and eliminated, they stagnate in the body and begin to compromise our wellbeing. Signs that toxins have begun to accumulate in the body:<sup>6</sup>

- A coating on the tongue
- Foul-smelling breath or body odor
- Mental fog or confusion
- Overall sense of stagnation or weakness
- Generalized body aches
- Diminished appetite
- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Bloating
- Fatigue or lethargy

If you identify with one or more of the above, chances are that there is some level of toxic residue in your system. The good news is that Ayurveda offers a myriad of tools for cleansing your system of these toxins. A tongue scraper is a fabulous way to start.

## Including a Tongue Scraper in Your Daily Routine

Having a daily routine is one of the most important tenants of Ayurveda. As the body becomes accustomed to the predictability of doing the same things at roughly the same time every day, the nervous system begins to relax. A morning routine, in particular, affords us an opportunity to prioritize those things that are most important while setting a positive tone for the entire day.<sup>7</sup> A typical Ayurvedic morning routine would include meditation, grooming practices (including the use of a tongue scraper), exercise, and bathing. Adding the use of a tongue scraper to your daily routine assists the body in eliminating toxins that have accumulated in the mouth overnight, massages and awakens the internal organs, stimulates the digestive capacity and ensures that you start your day feeling as fresh and clean as possible.

## How to Use A Tongue Scraper

Ideally, a tongue scraper is used every day, early in the morning, on an empty stomach. Simply hold the two ends of the tongue scraper in both hands. Extend the tongue and place the tongue scraper on the surface of the tongue, as far back as is comfortable. Gently pull the tongue scraper forward so that it removes the unwanted coating. Rinse the tongue scraper and repeat as necessary, usually 7-14 times.<sup>8</sup> For some, the use of a tongue scraper can trigger the gag reflex or, on occasion, vomiting. Using a tongue scraper gets easier with practice, but this uncomfortable side effect is easily avoided by relaxing the tongue or exhaling during use. It is also possible to be overly aggressive with a tongue scraper and to temporarily damage the taste buds.<sup>1</sup> Gentle strokes will remove the coating on the tongue without harming the underlying tissue.

## Buying a Tongue Scraper

While tongue scrapers come in many shapes and sizes, all tongue scrapers are not created equal. Metal tongue scrapers are much preferred over plastic, and stainless steel is balancing for all constitutions and imbalances—vata, pitta, and kapha.<sup>8</sup> Traditionally, a tongue scraper is also able to cleanse the entire width of the tongue so that the coating can be efficiently scraped from back to front, and removed. Some smaller designs do not span the width of the tongue and therefore cannot clear the tongue coating as effectively.

Banyan's tongue scraper is specifically designed to maximize the benefits of scraping the tongue daily. It mirrors the design of the tongue scrapers that have long been used in India. Banyan's tongue scraper is made of premium quality stainless steel and is manufactured in the USA. It is sturdy and long lasting – the only tongue scraper you will ever need! The wide shape is designed to cleanse tongues of all shapes and sizes and offers a broad area for cleaning the entire tongue with each stroke.

