

Ayurveda is all about creating sustainable healthy habits and acts of self-care into our daily routines. One very important act of self-care is the cleaning of the mouth. Upon waking, cleaning the mouth is one of the first things one should tend to. When we sleep, our bodies go through and clean out all the garbage like a natural janitorial system which provides a natural, beneficial detox. It is then our job to remove the cleansed toxins from the physical body. We can do this through routine oral hygiene practices.

The tongue can tell us a lot about what is going on inside our bodies. Do you ever look at your tongue in the morning? Or after you've eaten? According to Ayurveda, the tongue is connected to many of the vital organs throughout the body. The tongue is essentially a map of our internal organs (heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, spleen, stomach, small intestine, colon, and so on). Looking at the tongue is one of several methods for assessing the health of our organs. There is an abundance of information on the tongue that could be listed, but we are going to discuss proper steps for cleaning the mouth to achieve good oral hygiene. Listed below is the order in which the mouth should be cleaned.

1. Scrape the tongue. Start at the back of the tongue and pull gently to scrape the coating off of your tongue. Scrape the tongue a few times until the coating is off of the tongue. Scraping the tongue wakes up all the organs because as mentioned above, the tongue is a map of our organs. An extra benefit of scraping the tongue (my favorite) is that it improves the taste of everything. Here are some more benefits of tongue scraping:

- Improves oral hygiene
- Clears *ama* (toxins) and bacteria from the tongue
- Removes the unwanted coating from the tongue
- Promotes fresh breath
- Enhances the sense of taste
- Gently stimulates the internal organs

2. Brush the teeth. We all know that we should brush our teeth. Ayurveda likes herbal tooth powders and herbal toothpastes. Be sure to check out either the neem toothpaste or other herbal toothpaste samples at the studio!

3. Oil pull. Oil pulling is not something that was in the ancient texts, but it is practiced in modern day Ayurveda.. If you're brand new to oil pulling, start with 5 minutes and work your way up to about 15-20 minutes. 20 minutes can start to feel long and time consuming, so, try combining it with other parts of your morning routine– you can do it in the shower or while getting ready for the day, (I even sneak it in while on my early morning walk with my dog!) There are many benefits to oil pulling, here are some:

- Supports overall oral health and hygiene
- Removes natural toxins from the mouth
- Moisturizes the mouth
- Freshens the breath.

You can pull with any good quality oil. I used coconut oil for years, but switched to Banyan's Daily Swish and found it to be more pleasant,--it's refreshing and contains biome-benefitting herbs.

Now, it's time to enjoy some water- room temperature or warm-- and carry on with the rest of your daily routine!

By taking care of our mouths we are taking care of our overall health and wellness.

