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## Listerine Antiseptic Mouthwash

In today's society, tons of ads and commercials from oral care companies promise consumers fresh breath, whither teeth, and reduced plaque. On its website, Listerine claims its product Cool Mint [Listerine Antiseptic Mouthwash] "is not only a germ killer, but also a people pleaser". Are these products too good to be true? Can they deliver what they promise? If so, what are the side effects, if any, of Listerine mouthwash?

One of the inactive ingredients in Listerine mouthwash is alcohol; the original bottle of Listerine mouthwash contains 26.9 percent alcohol and Cool Mint contains 21.6 percent. According to [www.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.niaaa.nih.gov), 12 ounces of regular beer contains 5 percent alcohol and a 5 ounce glass of table wine contains about 12 percent alcohol. Surprisingly, mouthwash contains a lot more alcohol than a standard drink in the United States. Although manufacturers of mouthwash add chemical ingredients to modify the alcohol, it does not decrease its strength. The alcohol is turned into a specially denatured alcohol (SDA), which is supposed to make it "undrinkable". Hence the warning on its label, "do not swallow".

Due to an increasing awareness of dental hygiene as well as prevention of caries, the oral care market continues to experience market growth. As of 2017, it was valued at \$28.0 billion compared to \$652 million in 1988. Listerine is the top leader in the industry and represents 44.4 percent of the total mouthwash market. In addition, some organizations are teaming up with oral care companies to continue spreading knowledge on the importance of good oral care habits. For example, in 2015, the American Association of Orthodontics (AAO) collaborated with Oral-B and Crest to spread their initiatives among orthodontic patients. In addition, cosmetic whitening has become popular among consumers and is viewed by many as a great way to improve dental esthetics.

Listerine mouthwash offers directions on how to use their product "rinse full strength for 30 seconds with 20 ml (2/3 fluid ounce) morning and night." Although most consumers follow these instructions, swallowing even a small amount of mouthwash can be toxic. If a person with a history of alcohol abuse chooses to ingest mouthwash, some of the risks may involve liver failure, gastrointestinal damage or mouthwash overdose. In extreme cases, death may occur. For sufferers of dry mouth, the alcohol in mouthwash may increase dryness. Since saliva protects teeth from decay and controls bacteria in the mouth, there is a risk of developing oral cancer with regular use of mouthwash containing alcohol.

One of the misconceptions of using mouthwash with alcohol is consumers feel the fresh and tingly feeling means the product is more effective. However, some of the risks involved may no longer be worth the burning sensation. Interestingly, in the Review Article, Mouthwashes and Their Use in Different Oral Conditions published by the Scholars Journal of Dental Sciences, it is stated "long term use of alcohol based mouthwashes should be discouraged." On the other hand, alcohol free mouthwash does not have any side effects. However, it is neither widely sold nor as popular as regular mouthwash. Your options may improve by searching for the product

via online or at your local pharmacy and/or drugstore. Nevertheless, with increased knowledge of the health benefits of alcohol free mouthwash, this may cause retailers to increase its visibility.

In conclusion, if you are looking for a healthier alternative to mouthwash, you can make your own by using Young Living essential oils. For an easy to follow recipe, you can check out the following link: <https://www.diynatural.com/homemade-mouthwash>.

For your convenience, the recipe is provided below as it appears on the website with directions.

- A container – I use a small mason jar
- 1/2 cup filtered or distilled water (find the best water purification systems here)
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 2 drops tea tree essential oil (find 100% pure essential oils here)
- 2 drops peppermint essential oil

Baking soda will settle to the bottom of the jar when not in use, so be sure to shake mouthwash before each use. Swish about 2-3 teaspoons of this homemade formula in your mouth for a minute or two.