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Mouthwashes 101
Chances are very good that right now you have a bottle of mouthwash in your bathroom. Perhaps you're one of those people that uses it religiously every time you brush your teeth, or possibly you only break it out for big occasions when you want to make sure your breath is as fresh and clean as possible.

Regardless of the frequency that you use mouthwash, nine out of 10 you may not really know what mouthwash is and how it works. And to ensure you are properly using mouthwash as part of your oral hygiene regimen, we want to make sure you have all the facts. So here's a look at just what mouthwash is, what it does, and does it really help you keep your mouth healthy.

What is Mouthwash?
The two big components that make up most mouthwashes are water and alcohol. (Some are alcohol free). About 50% of most mouthwashes is water, about 20% alcohol, and then the remainder is made up of different ingredients like flavorings, colors, and antibacterial solutions. Additionally, depending on the overall purpose of the mouthwash some may include things like fluoride, or agents to help whiten teeth or strengthen enamel.

What Does Mouthwash Do?
So all the ingredients that make up the mouthwash also impact how it works. When you brush you're basically removing plaque build-up from your teeth and gums. However, sometimes you leave little bits of plaque and food particles behind. That's where mouthwash comes in – when used after you brush your teeth, it helps eliminate anything you may have missed. Plus being it's a liquid, it can get in areas between your teeth you can't reach with a toothbrush. Some mouthwashes help kill germs in your mouth that can cause bad breath. Others kill germs that cause gum disease. And some are designed specifically to prevent decay.

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