

Open your mouth and say ‘ah!’ 4 conditions a scalloped tongue can reveal about your health

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Rochester, Mich.---March 6, 2018---Did you know that your tongue could be telling you something about your health? According to Dr. Jeff Haddad, a dentist at Doolin Haddad Advanced Dentistry, which focuses on cosmetic, implant and restorative dentistry, a tongue that presents with indented or ridged edges may be a sign of specific issues that could be negatively impacting a patient’s overall well-being. The condition is known as “scalloped tongue,” and while rarely painful, Dr. Haddad said that knowing its root cause can help treat or prevent the underlying conditions that are giving the tongue its telltale rippled effect.

“Certain disorders lead to compression of the tongue against the teeth and over time, scalloping will result,” Haddad explained. “While scalloped tongue in and of itself isn’t threatening, the causes of scalloped tongue—like sleep apnea—can be dangerous and need to be addressed so further health complications don’t result.”

Haddad provides four primary reasons a scalloped tongue can appear:

1. **Parafunctional activities and bad habits:** These behaviors—such as teeth grinding, cheek sucking, picking at teeth and fingernail biting—often subconsciously happen due to stress, sleep disorders, systemic disease, poor tooth alignment or tooth loss, and trauma.
2. **Vitamin and mineral deficiencies:** When the body doesn’t get enough of certain B vitamins including vitamin B12, riboflavin (vitamin B2) and niacin (vitamin B3), and the mineral iron, tongue enlargement can occur causing scalloping.
3. **Temporomandibular Joint Conditions (TMJ) or Temporomandibular Joint Disorder (TMD):** Involving the joint that connects the jaw to the skull, injuries or certain conditions like dehydration, teeth grinding or the tongue pushing against the lower teeth to compensate for a misaligned joint can produce scalloping, and they are often accompanied by frequent headaches, neck pain and jaw tension.
4. **Snoring or Obstructive Sleep Apnea:** A scalloped tongue is an 80 percent positive indicator of a sleep breathing disorder like snoring or obstructive sleep apnea—which occurs when breathing stops several times per hour throughout the sleep cycle. Obstructive sleep apnea is very serious and can increase the chances of heart disease, stroke, diabetes and even death.

“Treatment options vary and may include neuromuscular dentistry evaluations to determine how to proceed in cases of TMD; reconstructive dentistry for when teeth are damaged or missing; or the use of dental sleep appliances which can help keep airways open to alleviate snoring and obstructive sleep apnea,” Haddad said. “The most important thing, though, is to see your dentist or physician for a proper diagnosis and course of action if you do notice a scalloped tongue.”

To learn more about Doolin Haddad Advanced Dentistry and the additional restorative and cosmetic dental services provided at the practice, visit www.discoverdh.com.

About Doolin Haddad Advanced Dentistry

Doolin Haddad Advanced Dentistry was founded in Rochester in 1990 by Dr. Kurt Doolin. Dr. Jeff Haddad joined the practice in 2002. In addition to their dental school training, both Drs. Doolin and Haddad are fellows of The Las Vegas Institute for Advanced Dental Studies and lecture nationally on implants, TMJ, and restorative and cosmetic dentistry. Marco Tironi, D.D.S. joined Doolin Haddad Advanced Dentistry in 2013; the practice has 13 team members. Discover Health. Discover Happiness. Discover How. DiscoverDH. To learn more, visit www.discoverdh.com.

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