



Managing Dry Mouth (Xerostomia)

“Xerostomia” (pronounced “zero-sto’me-ah”) is the medical word for “dry mouth,” due to decreased or absent saliva. This problem is quite common and is caused by a variety of medical conditions and medications.

Some helpful hints:

Sip cool water throughout the day. Let ice chips melt in your mouth--do not chew ice!

Drink milk (whole milk or 2%) with meals. Milk has moisturizing properties.

Restrict caffeine intake. Caffeine is a major cause of dry mouth.

Use a cool air humidifier in the bedroom. Clean and change the water daily. Let it run for an hour or two before you go to bed, and through the night.

Avoid all alcohol, and alcohol-containing mouthwashes. Alcohol from any source can irritate the tissues. Sodium lauryl sulfate can have the same effect – avoid toothpastes containing SLS.

Use sugar-free candy, gum, and beverages. Look for products containing Xylitol. Ice Breakers, Ice Cubes, Spry, Epic, Biotene Gum, and Theragum are examples of high-quality Xylitol-containing products.

Use hydrous lanolin USP (ie Lansinoh) on lips frequently during the day and especially at bedtime. Lansinoh and Purelan can be found where products for skin care while breastfeeding are sold.

See your dentist frequently. People with dry mouths are more prone to oral yeast infections as well as dental cavities. Excellent oral hygiene is necessary to prevent cavities and gum disease. Report any unusual mouth soreness or burning sensation to your dentist or physician.

Saliva substitutes, stimulants, and moisturizing gels:

The products listed are available without a prescription.

You may have to ask your pharmacist to order them for you.

Tablets:

“SalivaSure” Dissolve one tablet slowly, up to one per hour. Mild mint flavor, will not cause cavities, no drug interactions. Ask pharmacist to order.

Gels:

“Oral Balance” (Laclede) 1.5 oz tube. Spread on tissues, and under dentures as needed. Water-based gel.

Toothpaste:

“Biotene Toothpaste” (Laclede) 4.5 oz tube. Available as regular toothpaste and as gel. Mild tasting, gentle cleaning. Contains MFP fluoride. “Prevident,” available from Sunbury Plaza Dental; prescription-strength fluoride

Liquid:

“Saliva Substitute” (Roxane) 4 oz or “Oasis” (GSK) 1 oz; mouthspray
“Oral Balance Dry Mouth Moisturizing Liquid (Laclede) 1.5 oz
“Stoppers 4 Dry Mouth Spray” (Woodridge Inc.) 1 oz

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