

Dry Mouth

(Xerostomia)

Causes of Dry Mouth:

- Certain prescription drugs
- Certain over-the-counter medications
- Tobacco
- Mouth breathing
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Alcohol
- Caffeine
- Spicy or salty foods
- Breathing unusually dry, cold, dusty, or dirty air
- Stress
- Vitamin deficiencies
- Simply not drinking enough water
- Radiation and chemotherapy
- Arthritis
- Diabetes
- Menopause
- Sjogren's Syndrome
- Lupus
- Parkinson's disease

What drugs and medications can cause dry mouth?

- High blood pressure medicines
- Antidepressants
- Tranquilizers
- Antihistamines
- Anti-Parkinson agents
- Antipsychotics
- Decongestants
- Narcotic pain relievers
- Chemotherapy
- Antidiarrheals
- Bronchodilators

What problems might develop because of dry mouth?

- Rapid development of tooth decay
- Sore tissues
- Worsening periodontal disease
- Sore spots and ulcers under dentures
- Difficulty wearing dentures
- Mouth sores in non-denture wearers
- Breath doesn't feel as fresh
- Difficulty chewing and swallowing normal foods
- Difficulty tasting normal foods
- Difficulty speaking
- Burning sensation in the mouth
- Dry or painful tongue

How can I avoid destruction from rapid tooth decay?

- Avoid hidden sugars, such as cough drops, lemon drops, hard candy, breath mints, chewing gum, soda pop, etc. People with dry mouths can get literally dozens of cavities in a matter of a few months.
- Use a prescription fluoride preparation. These get more fluoride to the teeth than regular fluoride toothpaste. They are available as a mouthrinse, brush-on gel, or a gel applied in a custom-made mouth tray. Ask your dentist for prescriptions, or construction of a custom fluoride tray. Prevident and Gel-Kam are examples.
- Maintain superior oral hygiene habits: brush at least twice a day for two minutes per brushing, floss every day, and have your teeth cleaned/checked twice a year.

What will help relieve my dry mouth?

- Increase water intake throughout the day, and take frequent small sips
- Add moisture to the air with a humidifier.
- Protect lips with a balm.
- In cold weather keep mouth and nose covered with a scarf when outdoors.
- Don't use tobacco or alcohol.
- Avoid strong toothpastes.
- Avoid mouthwashes containing alcohol.
- Use only toothpastes and mouthwashes that don't contain sodium laurel sulfate.
- Avoid spicy and salty foods, and products containing cinnamon, peppermint, or wintergreen.
- Take a daily multi-vitamin.
- Use oral products that contains Xylitol.
- Be sure your doctors and pharmacist are aware of all the medications you are taking.
- Ask your doctor if your medications can be adjusted or changed.
- Use a saliva substitute or mouth moisturizers.
- Use *sugarless* hard candies to stimulate saliva flow.

What products are available?

Mouthwashes

Oasis
BetaCell Oral Rinse
Biotene Mouthwash
TheraBrite Oral Rinse
Tom's of Maine Natural Mouthwash, Oral Moistening

Sprays

Moi-Stir Mouth Moistener spray (carboxymethylcellulose)
Mouth Kote mouth spray
Salivart Oral Moisturizer spray (carboxymethylcellulose)
Stoppers 4 Dry Mouth Spray (glycerin)
Thayers Dry Mouth Spray (glycerin)

Toothpastes

Biotene Dry Mouth Toothpaste
Rembrandt Toothpaste for Canker Sore Sufferers
TheraBreath Oxygenating Toothpaste
Tom's of Maine Natural Anticavity & Dry Mouth Toothpaste

Gums, Mints

Biotene Dry Mouth Gum
XyliChew mints

Gels

Orajel Dry Mouth Moisturizing Gel
Oral Balance Mouth Moisturizing Gel, by Biotene
Saliva Substitute, by Roxane
Spry Dry Mouth Tooth Gel

Other

Biotene Dry Mouth Denture Grip
Moi-Stir Oral Swabsticks (carboxymethylcellulose)
Salagen Tablets, 5mg (pilocarpine HCl); by prescription only

Where can I find these products?

- Stores carry a variety of products, but there is no one store that has them all. Keep trying different stores.
- The pharmacist can help you locate some of these products.
- On the internet, www.drugstore.com has a good selection of these products.