

Dry mouth (Xerostomia)

This leaflet gives advice on managing a dry mouth.

What is dry mouth?

A dry mouth or *Xerostomia* can occur when your salivary glands do not produce enough saliva. Some people experience a dry mouth when they are nervous or dehydrated. For others it can be a persistent problem. Dry mouth can be caused by an underlying problem or medical condition

What can cause a dry mouth?

A dry mouth can be caused by the following:

- Medications such as anti-depressants, anti-histamines and diuretics can cause dry mouth. Check the information sheet enclosed with your medication to see if dry mouth is listed as a side effect.
- Anxiety and stress.
- Diabetes.
- Radiotherapy and some forms of chemotherapy.
- Sjögren's syndrome.
- Menopause.
- Smoking.

What you can do to manage the symptoms

- Sip or drink water frequently.
- Use sugar-free gum and sugar-free sweets such as 'salivex pastilles' to stimulate saliva.
- Maintain good oral hygiene with Flouride toothpastes and Flouride mouthwashes.
- Use an artificial saliva/saliva substitute, e.g. Boots Expert Care Dry Mouth Spray, Gladosane spray or Biotin Ora-balance gel.
- Avoid alcohol (including alcohol based mouth washes).
- Avoid smoking and caffeine such as tea, coffee and cola drinks.

Contact us

Oral & Maxillofacial Department Tel: 0118 322 7139 Fax: 0118 322 7675.

Further information

Visit the Trust website at www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

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