

SKYLINE DENTAL

OFFICE NEWSLETTER

Dr. Michael Olin
Dr. Mehdi Salari

Dr. Karen Coe
Dr. Zack Porter

2137 NE 4th Street
Bend, Oregon 97701

Phone: (541) 389-4807
Email: info@SkylineDentalLLC.com
www.SkylineDentalLLC.com

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DENTAL NEWS & INFORMATION

DRY MOUTH... Xerostomia

(Excerpts from Kleinegger, DDS, MS, OHSU + Marek, Pharm D., Univ. of Iowa + The Academy of General Dentistry Website and Journals)

Dry mouth (or xerostomia) is a condition that results from reduced saliva flow and has become an increasing problem among American adults, and senior citizen in particular. Saliva is vital to everyday processes, such as tasting, swallowing, speech and digestion. Saliva also helps defend against tooth decay and bacterial, fungal & viral infections.

What are the causes of Dry Mouth?

Many commonly prescribed medications can cause a decrease in salivary function. These medications include antihistamines, antidepressants, antipsychotics, antihypertensives, anti-inflammatories, diuretics, sedatives and narcotics. Medications are the cause of 90% of dry mouth cases.

Dry mouth can also be a result of some disorders, such as Sjogren's syndrome, diabetes, lupus, kidney disease, stress, anxiety, depression, nutritional deficiency or dysfunctions of the immune system, such as HIV/AIDS.

Certain cancer treatments can alter the flow and composition of saliva and the salivary glands, resulting in dry mouth.

What are the Signs & Symptoms of Dry Mouth?

1) Increased need to sip or drink fluids. 2) Difficulty speaking. 3) Difficulty with swallowing. 4) Burning or sore sensation in the mouth. 4) Diminished or altered sense of taste. 5) Increased susceptibility to oral infections. 6) Sleep interruptions due to thirst. 7) Tooth decay. 8) Gingivitis. 9) Stale or bad breath.

What are some ways to help manage Dry Mouth?

Helpful Advice:

- Sip cool water throughout the day. Let ice chips melt in the mouth (don't chew ice!). You need to drink and hydrate adequately.
- It is most important to have meticulous and regular home care with brushing & flossing.
- See your Dentist regularly. People with dry mouth are more prone to cavities, gum disease and oral yeast infections. Excellent oral hygiene is necessary to prevent dental problems.
- Neutral Sodium Fluoride Prescription and/or trays to help minimize risk of decay and strengthen teeth and roots.
- Try drinking milk with meals. Milk has moisturizing properties & helps some people to swallow their food.
- Use a cool air humidifier in the bedroom. Start the humidifier an hour or two before bedtime and let it run through the night.
- Use sugar-free candy, gum and beverages. Look for products that contain Xylitol (a sweetener that does not cause cavities). Chewing gum will stimulate saliva flow. Overuse of acidic candies & foods can cause a sore mouth.

- Restrict caffeine intake. Caffeine is a major cause of dry mouth
- For dry lips, use Hydrous Lanolin or Blistex Herbal Answer during the day and especially at bedtime. Avoid petroleum products as they actually dry over time.
- Avoid alcohol & alcohol-containing mouthwashes. Alcohol has a drying effect & can also irritate the tissues.
- Avoid dry or salty foods.
- Avoid smoking.
- If possible, sleep on your side in order to reduce mouth breathing.

Useful Commercial Products:

The products listed below are available without a prescription. They can be used as often as needed and do not react or interfere with other prescription drugs and do not have side-effects.

Tablets:

- SalivaSure Tablets (formerly called Salix SST) by Scandinavian Formulas, Inc.
 - To stimulate natural saliva flow, dissolve one tablet slowly under tongue up to every hour as needed
 - Will not cause cavities or sore mouth
 - Easy to carry, mild mint flavor, no drug interactions

Gum:

- Biotene Dry Mouth Gum (Made by Laclede)
 - Contains Xylitol (helps prevent decay)
 - Contains antibacterial enzymes normally found in saliva

Gel:

- Oral Balance (Laclede) – 1.5 oz. tube
 - Moisturizing water based gel, especially useful at night
 - Spread on tissues and under dentures as needed for long-lasting effects

Toothpaste:

- Biotene Toothpaste (Laclede) – 4.5 oz. tube
 - Mild tasting, gently cleaning detergent-free toothpaste
 - Contains fluoride
 - Also available in a gel formulation

Mouthwash:

- Biotene (Made by Laclede)
 - Alcohol-free
 - Contains Xylitol (helps prevent decay)
 - Contains antibacterial enzymes normally found in saliva

Saliva Substitute Liquid:

- Many brands are commercially available.
- Usually well received by patients
- Benefits usually short-lived

Additional information & Web Resources on Dry Mouth

www.nidcr.nih.gov/OralHealth/Topics/DryMouth/DryMouth.htm
www.agd.org/public/OralHealthFacts/
www.ada.org/public/topics/dry_mouth.asp
www.oralcancerfoundation.org/dental/xerostomia.htm
www.mayoclinic.com/health/dry-mouth/HA00034

NEWS FROM OUR PRACTICE

\$20 Gift Certificates for your Referrals

As a token of appreciation to our existing patients, we will be mailing a Gift Certificate good for a \$20 credit at our office; when a New Patient to our office lists your name as the referral source to our dental practice.

We appreciate our existing patients and would welcome your extended family and friends into our practice. Feel free to refer your family and friends to our website (www.SkylineDentalLLC.com) for an overview of our practice, services and policies.

Please check with our Front Office for additional details about our Referral Appreciation Credit.