

## What Causes Dry Mouth

There are four main causes of Dry Mouth

- Certain Medications
- Certain Medical Conditions
- Cancer and Cancer Treatments
- Increasing Age

### Certain Medications

.If you take a combination of medications you are more than likely to suffer from a dry mouth. Dry mouth is a side effect of more than 500 different medications. Several types of medications can cause dry mouth and these may include;

- Antihistamines
- Antidepressants
- Beta Blocking Drugs
- Anti-Hypertensive's
- Diuretics
- Many of the over the counter cold and flu medications

### Some Medical Conditions

Two of the most common medical conditions that cause dry mouth are Diabetes and Sjogren's Syndrome.

Diabetes sufferers may have a dry mouth due to increased fluid loss due to increase urination or other underlying metabolic disorders.

Sjogren's Syndrome is when the patient's immune system attacks the body's tear and salivary glands causing dryness throughout the head and neck area.

## Cancer and Cancer Treatments

Due to treatments that patients undergo for Cancer and the medications that they have to take for them, Cancer patients often report that they suffer from reduced saliva flow, particularly patients that have undergone radiotherapy treatments for cancers of the head and neck. Many of these patients will not regain normal salivary flow post treatment.

## Increasing Age

Reduced Salivary flow is normal as flow reduces as we get older. As patients get older too they are more likely to be taking a combination of drugs together and also are more likely to be suffering conditions such as Diabetes, Sjogren's Syndrome and Cancer.

## Treatment

- Regular Dental Assessment
- Change Medication or Dose if Possible
- Good Oral Hygiene
- Brushing with Fluoride Toothpaste
- Diet – Avoiding Acidic and Sugary Foods

## Products That Can Help

- GC Dry Mouth Gel
- Colgate Dry Mouth Mouthwash
- Biotene Products

## Dry Mouth or Xerostomia

*Dry Mouth happens when there is lack of saliva, or spit, in the mouth.*

While most of us take saliva for granted. It plays an important part in the mouth. It helps to moisten food and helps with digestion and comfort while eating. Saliva also helps to buffer acid in the mouth which helps prevent tooth decay. When you have a lack of saliva in your mouth it can be very uncomfortable for the patient making it difficult to swallow and chew foods. When you have dry mouth you may have an increase of tooth decay as there is no buffer to stop the acids in your mouth attacking the teeth.

The symptoms of dry mouth can range from very mild to very severe. If you think that you may be suffering from Dry Mouth, have a chat with your Dentist or Pharmacist as they may have information and products to help you treat Dry Mouth.

You have a mild case of Dry Mouth if;

- Your tongue sticks to the roof of your mouth
- You have trouble chewing or swallowing

You may have a more moderate case of Dry Mouth if;

- You are always licking your lips.
- You avoid certain foods which make your symptoms worse.
- You find it difficult to keep dentures in place.
- You find yourself sucking on lollies, applying lip balm and drinking lots of water to compensate as your mouth is always feeling so dry.

You have a severe case of Dry mouth if;

- You have sore burning mouth or tongue when eating.
- Your lips are always cracked and often suffer from blister and mouth ulcers.
- Your dry mouth is having a negative impact on your quality and enjoyment of life.
- Your Dentist has noted an increase in frequent decay, and increased build-up of plaque, food debris and also fungal infections.
- Your tongue is rough and pebble like and your cheeks may look red and shiny.