

# MANAGING DRY MOUTH

How to comfort and care for this condition also known as xerostomia.

Dry mouth (xerostomia) is a common but uncomfortable condition where saliva production is dramatically reduced — making it difficult to keep the mouth moist. Approximately 10% of the general population experience persistent oral dryness and over 25% of the elderly struggle with daily oral dryness.<sup>1-5</sup>

## What Are the Symptoms of Dry Mouth?

Now that your dental care professional has diagnosed you with dry mouth, it's important to be aware of the more persistent symptoms of the condition. Here's what to look out for:

- Trouble tasting, chewing, swallowing or speaking
- A sticky, dry feeling in the mouth or throat
- Cracked lips
- A dry, rough tongue
- Mouth sores
- Burning in the mouth or throat<sup>6</sup>

## What Causes Dry Mouth?

The most common cause of dry mouth is medication use, with more than 500 frequently prescribed drugs listing dry mouth as a common side effect. Dry mouth can also be caused by medical conditions like diabetes, Sjogren's Syndrome and other auto-immune diseases, as well as medical treatments like radiation and chemotherapy.

## How Can Dry Mouth Impact Oral Health?

Believe it or not — saliva is a very important tool to help fight tooth decay. It's your body's own first line of defense, bathing teeth naturally in calcium, phosphate and fluoride. Without proper saliva production, you're at greater risk for getting cavities.<sup>7</sup> Without enough saliva, dry mouth can also lead to gingivitis (gum disease) and bad breath, so it's important to talk to your dentist if you're experiencing any symptoms.

## References:

1. Guggenheimer, J., & Moore, P.A. (2003). Xerostomia: etiology, recognition and treatment. *J Am Dent Assoc*, 134(1): 61-9.
2. Atkinson, J.C., Grisius, M., & Massey, W. (2005). Salivary hypofunction and xerostomia: diagnosis and treatment. *Dent Clin North Am*, 49(2): 309-26.
3. Fox, P. C. (2008, Feb). Xerostomia: Recognition and management. *Acces—Special Supplementary Issue*: 2-7.
4. Al-Kholy, E.A., et al. (2014). The relationship between salivary levels of cortisol, chromogranin A (CgA) and xerostomia in post-menopausal women. *Tanta Dental Journal*, 11: 161-168.
5. Douglas, L.M. (2009). Managing xerostomia. *Vital*, 6: 32-34.
6. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research. (2017). Dry mouth (xerostomia). *NIH Publication*, 17-3174. [https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/Dry-Mouth-Q%26A\\_0.pdf](https://www.nidcr.nih.gov/sites/default/files/2020-11/Dry-Mouth-Q%26A_0.pdf)
7. Mouth Healthy. (2018). 4 reasons water is the best beverage for your teeth. <https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/nutrition/food-tips/water-best-beverage>
8. Among OTC mouth rinses.
9. Chewing gum and lozenges do not contain fluoride.

## How Can ACT® Oral Care Products Help?

ACT® has a suite of products solely dedicated to helping patients live with the symptoms of dry mouth and is the #1 dentist and hygienist recommended fluoride rinse brand.<sup>8</sup> ACT® Dry Mouth Rinse contains 7 effective moisturizers that provide immediate comfort and 2 hydrating polymers that lock in moisture. The rinse also contains fluoride to help prevent cavities and strengthen teeth - all with a great mild mint taste. And for on-the-go comfort that is safe to use throughout the day, try ACT® Dry Mouth Gum and ACT® Dry Mouth Lozenges.<sup>9</sup>

## Do's and Don'ts with Dry Mouth<sup>6</sup>

- DO**
  - Drink water or sugarless drinks throughout the day
  - Use sugar-free gum or lozenges (e.g. ACT® Dry Mouth Gum and ACT® Dry Mouth Lozenges)
  - Sip on water while you eat to aid in chewing and swallowing
  - Use a humidifier in your bedroom at night
- DON'T**
  - Use tobacco or drink alcohol, as they both dry the mouth
  - Drink beverages with caffeine such as coffee, tea or some sodas
  - Eat spicy or salty foods as they may irritate a dry mouth
  - Eat sugary or sticky foods

