

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.

Contacting us

Oral & Maxillofacial Department, Tel: 0118 322 7139 or email: rbb-tr.cat1@nhs.net

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery, May 2022

Next review due: May 2024