

## **10 steps towards managing a dry mouth**

*Please read this information sheet.* If you have any questions, particularly about the treatment or potential side-effects, please ask your doctor.

- **Sip on juices and other fluids throughout the day.** Rinse with water. Keep water at your bedside.
- **Replace missing saliva** with salivary substitutes ( e.g. *Artificial Saliva, Glandosane, Luborant, Biotene Oralbalance, AS Saliva Orthana, Salivace, Saliveze*).
- **Stimulate saliva** with
  - sugar-free chewing gums ( e.g. *EnDeKay* or *Orbit*) or
  - diabetic sweets or
  - *Salivix* or SST if advised or
  - drugs that stimulate salivation (*Salagen*) *if advised by the Specialist.*
- **Avoid spicy or dry foods** or hard crunchy foods such as biscuits, or dunk in liquids. Take small bites and eat slowly. Eat soft creamy foods (casseroles, soups), or cool foods with a high liquid content - melon, grapes, or ice cream. Moisten foods with gravies, sauces, extra oil, margarine, salad dressings, sour cream, Mayonnaise or yogurt. Pineapple has an enzyme that helps clean the mouth.
- **Always take water or non-alcoholic drinks with meals.**
- **Avoid anything that may worsen dryness**, such as;
  - drugs, unless they are essential (e.g. antidepressants)
  - alcohol (including in mouthwashes)
  - smoking
  - caffeine (coffee, some soft drinks)
  - mouthbreathing.
- **Protect against dental caries** by avoiding sugary foods/drinks and by
  - reducing sugar intake (avoid snacking and eating last thing at night)
  - avoiding sticky foods such as toffee
  - keeping your mouth very clean (twice daily toothbrushing and flossing)
  - using a fluoride toothpaste
    - using fluoride gels or mouthwashes daily before going to bed
    - having regular dental checks.

- **Protect against thrush and halitosis** by
  - keeping your mouth very clean
  - keeping your mouth as moist as possible
  - rinsing twice daily with chlorhexidine (e.g. *Chlorohex*, *Corsodyl*, *Eludril*) or triclosan (e.g. *Plax*)
  - brushing or scraping your tongue
  - keeping dentures out at night
  - disinfect dentures in hypochlorite (e.g. *Milton*, *Dentural*)
  - use antifungals if recommended by Specialist.
- **Protect the lips** with a lip salve or petroleum jelly (e.g. *Vaseline*).
- **Consider a humidifier** for the bedroom.
  
- Useful website: [www.nohic.nidcr.nih.gov/pubs/drymouth/dmouth.htm](http://www.nohic.nidcr.nih.gov/pubs/drymouth/dmouth.htm)

*A patient has the right under common law to give or withhold consent to medical examination of treatment. This is one of the basic principles of health care. Patients are entitled to receive sufficient information in a way they can understand about the proposed treatments, the possible alternatives and any substantial risk or risks which may be special in kind or magnitude or special to the patient, so that they can make a balanced judgement. (UK Health Dept. 19.2.99. HSC 1999/031)*

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