

DRY MOUTH SYNDROME

Several readers have inquired about concerns with dry mouth. I find it to be an increasing problem with my patients and it is a serious condition not to be dismissed. Plaque becomes very aggressive and it can quickly lead to rampant, dental decay.

Dry mouth affects about a third of adults, as saliva flow decreases with age. Medications for allergies, blood pressure, anti-depressants and diuretics also may be major factors. Radiation treatments and chemotherapies can damage salivary glands.

Daily, meticulous, oral care is critical to prevent dental problems and regular preventative hygiene appointments are required to closely monitor any progression of dental disease. But, **most importantly**, avoid the routine use of products, such as, cough drops, hard candy, breath fresheners, gum, lozenges or drinks that contain **sugar**. These same products made with xylitol would be significantly better. Products containing alcohol or caffeine will aggravate dry mouth and should be limited. Drink water frequently.

There are products available, over the counter, especially designed to help with dry mouth syndrome. Biotene and Oasis are two companies that make mouth rinses, gum, toothpaste and sprays that many people find beneficial. Ask your pharmacist if your medications will cause dry mouth and if so, perhaps your physician can change them.

Any questions or comments go to drcadden.com.



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