

# Dry mouth

## What is Dry Mouth?

Dry mouth, or xerostomia, typically results from decreased saliva production.

## Causes of Dry Mouth

1. **Medications:** Many medications, such as those for allergies, blood pressure, rheumatic diseases, and psychiatric conditions, can cause dry mouth. Dry mouth is most common when multiple medications are used simultaneously.
2. **Other Health Conditions:** Conditions like Sjögren's syndrome and other rheumatic diseases, diabetes, and hormonal changes can affect saliva production.
3. **Age:** Saliva production naturally decreases with age.
4. **Lifestyle:** Smoking and alcohol use can contribute to symptoms of dry mouth, as can excessive consumption of coffee or caffeinated tea.

## Risks and Consequences

Besides affecting eating and digestion, saliva protects teeth from decay, mucous membranes from inflammation, and helps cleanse the mouth and throat. Dry mouth can expose you to several oral health issues:

- **Tooth Decay:** Saliva protects teeth by cleaning the mouth and neutralizing acids that attack tooth enamel. Reduced saliva secretion increases the risk of caries (see: [Dental Caries – Dental Brochure](#)).
- **Difficulties in Eating and Speaking:** Dry mouth can complicate chewing, swallowing, and moving the tongue, and can cause soreness and burning sensations.
- **Nighttime Awakening:** The sensation of dry mouth can disturb sleep.
- **Bad Breath:** A lack of saliva can lead to increased bacterial growth in the mouth.

## Self-Care

### 1. Drinking, Eating, and Moisturizing:

- Drink water regularly throughout the day, including during meals. Keep a glass of water by your bed at night.
- Avoid sugary and acidic drinks and foods.
- Use xylitol products after eating.

### 2. Pharmacy Products:

- Try using a moisturizing gel or lozenges designed to treat dry mouth.

### 3. Cooking Oil:

- Try using small amounts of cooking oil to moisturize your mouth and lips.

### 4. Diet and Lifestyle:

- Brush your teeth morning and night for 2 minutes with fluoride toothpaste and clean between your teeth daily. Additional fluoride may sometimes be necessary, as advised by your dentist (see: [Dental Caries – Dental Brochure](#)).
- Quit smoking and reduce alcohol and caffeine consumption.

### 5. Use of Removable Denture:

- If you have a removable denture, take special care of prosthesis hygiene and do not wear the denture overnight (see: [Introduction to and Care of Dentures – Patient Instruction](#)).

**Regular check-ups are particularly important because the risk of decay is heightened as saliva production decreases.**

*Healthy mouth, healthier you.*