

# Dry Mouth Relief



Saliva is like a bloodstream to the oral cavity. As does blood, saliva helps build and maintain the health of the soft and hard tissues. Saliva removes waste products and provides disease-fighting substances throughout the mouth. It contains the minerals that maintain the integrity of the enamel surface and thus is the major cavity preventive agent. Also, patients with dry mouths (xerostomia) experience difficulty chewing, speaking, and swallowing.

There are more than 400 commonly used prescription drugs that lead to mouth dryness. Common examples are analgesics, antihistamines, anti-hypertensives, anti-depressants, anti-anxiety agents, diuretics and appetite suppressants. Radiation, chemotherapy, and autoimmune diseases also reduce salivary flow.

To relieve dry mouth symptoms Dr. Kanehl and his team recommend chewing sugar free gum containing xylitol. Chewing is the most efficient way to stimulate salivary flow by causing muscles to compress the salivary glands and release saliva. Xylitol is a sugar substitute that cannot be processed by the bacteria in the mouth. Another way to fight dry mouth is to use a saliva substitute, such as Biotene mouth rinse or spray, especially before bed time. Biotene is available at Dr. Kanehl's office.

(From The American Dental Association)

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