

Dry Mouth

Dry mouth is not just unpleasant. Saliva is necessary to protect our teeth so too much dry mouth can lead to cavities and dental problems. Below are some tips on treating dry mouth:

- Avoid caffeine and alcohol
- Avoid salty foods
- Use Biotene products (rinses and pastes) – these are over the counter aids which will help protect teeth (in the dental section of your drug store)
- Use sugarless gum or hard candy – this will increase saliva production (but make sure it's sugarless or it can worsen your teeth). Products which contain xylitol or sorbitol are especially good at increasing saliva. Chew sugarfree gum for 20 minutes after meals and snacks.
- Try drops of natural lemon or lime juice (or other tart flavors, try for sugar free) to your mouth (can use the bottled juice from grocery store or the version in the plastic lemon)

The British Dental Association recommends chewing sugarfree gum as part of a routine dental hygiene program to protect teeth against decay. Both xylitol and sorbitol gums enhance the remineralization potential of plaque after only six weeks of use. It has been proven from long-term clinical testing using children using normal salivary flow that chewing sugarfree gum for 20 minutes after eating from addition to optimal use of fluorides and meticulous oral hygiene produced a significant reduction from caries (in some cases up to 40 per cent) compared using those who did not chew. Sugarfree gum also increases saliva flow that can provide relief from the discomfort of dry mouth.

Examples of products:



SmartMouth Sugar-Free with Xylitol Refreshing Dry Mouth Relief, Mint (\$24 per 30 on Amazon)



Spry Chewing Gum, Spearmint (\$8 per 100, drugstore.com)

Other options (by prescription) are:

- Saliva substitutes
- Evoxac
- Pilocarpine swish/rinse
- SalivaMax calcium phosphate rinse (www.salivamax.com)

SalivaMax

This calcium phosphate rinse works as a partial substitute for saliva. To use it, mix 1 packet with 1oz of water. Swish half the solution for 1 minute and spit out. Repeat with the second half.

You can rinse with SalivaMax in that way up to 10 times a day.

—Chris Aiken, M.D., updated 6/12/2017