

Factsheet

Dry mouth

Having a dry mouth may damage your teeth. Tooth decay can develop faster in a dry mouth. It is important to know how to care for and protect your teeth when you do not have enough saliva.

Why is saliva important?

Saliva is nature's mouthwash! It helps to keep the mouth and teeth healthy. This is a very important role. Some of saliva's jobs:

- Makes the mouth moist
- Makes it easier to speak and chew and swallow food
- Helps the body to digest food
- Helps to protect the teeth from tooth decay
- Helps to stop infections developing inside the mouth

Things you can do at home to beat dry mouth

- ✓ Drink lots of water
- ✓ Avoid or drink less coffee, and tea
- ✓ Avoid sugary drinks such as energy drinks and soft drinks
- ✓ Sip water as you eat
- ✓ Chew sugar-free gum
- ✓ Choose soups for meals
- ✓ Use sauces to moisten foods to make them less dry. This can make chewing and swallowing easier. It may also make your food taste better.
- ✓ Avoid smoking, alcohol and illicit drugs
- ✓ Know that spicy or salty foods may cause pain if you have a dry mouth
- ✓ Try using a humidifier at night to moisten the air in your bedroom
- ✓ If you wear dentures, take them out every night when you go to sleep, and clean them well every day
- ✓ Brush your teeth with a fluoride toothpaste

