

## DRY MOUTH (XEROSTOMIA)

### *Causes of Dry Mouth:*

- Certain prescription drugs
- Certain over-the-counter medications
- Tobacco
- Mouth breathing
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Alcohol
- Caffeine
- Spicy or salty foods
- Breathing unusually dry, cold, dusty, or dirty air
- Stress
- Vitamin deficiencies
- Simply not drinking enough water
- Radiation and chemotherapy
- Arthritis
- Diabetes
- Menopause
- Sjogren's Syndrome
- Lupus
- Parkinson's disease

### *What drugs and medications can cause dry mouth?*

- High blood pressure medicines
- Antidepressants
- Tranquilizers
- Antihistamines
- Anti-Parkinson agents
- Antipsychotics
- Decongestants
- Narcotic pain relievers
- Chemotherapy
- Antidiarrheals
- Bronchodilators

### *What problems might develop because of dry mouth?*

- Rapid development of tooth decay
- Sore tissues
- Worsening periodontal disease
- Sore spots and ulcers under dentures
- Difficulty wearing dentures
- Mouth sores in non-denture wearers
- Breath doesn't feel as fresh
- Difficulty chewing and swallowing normal foods
- Difficulty tasting normal foods
- Difficulty speaking
- Burning sensation in the mouth
- Dry or painful tongue

### *How can I avoid destruction from rapid tooth decay?*

- Avoid hidden sugars, such as cough drops, lemon drops, hard candy, breath mints, chewing gum, soda pop, etc. People with dry mouths can get literally dozens of cavities in a matter of a few months.
- Use a prescription fluoride preparation. These get more fluoride to the teeth than regular fluoride toothpaste. They are available as a mouthrinse, brush-on gel, or a gel applied in a custom-made mouth tray. Ask your dentist for prescriptions, or construction of a custom fluoride tray. Prevident and Gel-Kam are examples.
- Maintain superior oral hygiene habits: brush at least twice a day for two minutes per brushing, floss every day, and have your teeth cleaned/checked twice a year.

### *What will help relieve my dry mouth?*

- Increase water intake throughout the day, and take frequent small sips
- Add moisture to the air with a humidifier. Protect lips with a balm.
- In cold weather keep mouth and nose covered with a scarf when outdoors.
- Don't use tobacco or alcohol.
- Avoid strong toothpastes.
- Avoid mouthwashes containing alcohol.
- Use only toothpastes and mouthwashes that don't contain sodium laurel sulfate.
- Avoid spicy and salty foods, and products containing cinnamon, peppermint, or wintergreen.
- Take a daily multi-vitamin.
- Use oral products that contains Xylitol.
- Be sure your doctors and pharmacist are aware of all the medications you are taking.
- Ask your doctor if your medications can be adjusted or changed.
- Use a saliva substitute or mouth moisturizers.
- Use sugarless hard candies to stimulate saliva flow.