

10 steps towards managing a dry mouth

Please read this information sheet. If you have any questions, particularly about the treatment or potential side-effects, please ask Professor.

- **Sip on water and other non-sugary fluids throughout the day.** Rinse with water after meals. Keep water at your bedside.
- **Replace missing saliva** with salivary substitutes (e.g. *Artificial Saliva, Glandosane, Luborant, Biotene Oralbalance, AS Saliva Orthana, Salivace, Saliveze*). Alcohol-free mouthrinses (*BioXtra* and *Biotène*), or moisturising gels (*Oralbalance, BioXtra*) may help
- **Stimulate saliva** with
 - sugar-free chewing gums (e.g. *EnDeKay, Orbit, Biotène dry mouth gum* or *BioXtra chewing gum*) or
 - diabetic sweets or
 - *Salivix* or *SST* if advised or
 - drugs that stimulate salivation (*Salagen*) *if advised by the Specialist.*
- **Always take water or non-alcoholic drinks with meals and avoid spicy, dry or hard crunchy foods such as biscuits, or dunk in liquids.** Take small bites and eat slowly. Eat soft creamy foods (casseroles, soups), or cool foods with a high liquid content - melon, grapes, or ice cream. Moisten foods with gravies, sauces, extra oil, margarine, salad dressings, sour cream, Mayonnaise or yogurt. Pineapple has an enzyme that helps clean the mouth.
- **Avoid anything that may worsen dryness**, such as;
 - drugs, unless they are essential (e.g. antidepressants)
 - alcohol (including in mouthwashes)
 - smoking
 - caffeine (coffee, some soft drinks)
 - mouthbreathing.
- **Protect against dental caries** by avoiding sugary foods/drinks and by
 - reducing sugar intake (avoid snacking and eating last thing at night)
 - avoiding sticky foods such as toffee
 - keeping your mouth very clean (twice daily toothbrushing and flossing)
 - using a fluoride toothpaste

- using fluoride gels or mouthwashes (0.05% fluoride) daily before going to bed
- having regular dental checks.
- **Protect against thrush, gum problems and halitosis by**
 - keeping your mouth very clean
 - keeping your mouth as moist as possible
 - rinsing twice daily with chlorhexidine (e.g. *Chlorohex*, *Corsodyl*, *Eludril*) or triclosan (e.g. *Plax*)
 - brushing or scraping your tongue
 - keeping dentures out at night
 - disinfect dentures in hypochlorite (e.g. *Milton*, *Dentural*)
 - use antifungals if recommended by Specialist.
- **Protect the lips** with a lip salve or petroleum jelly (e.g. *Vaseline*).
- **Consider a humidifier** for the bedroom.

- Useful websites:

<http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/HealthInformation/OralHealthInformationIndex/SjogrensSyndrome.htm>

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/bssassociation>

A patient has the right under common law to give or withhold consent to medical examination of treatment. This is one of the basic principles of health care. Patients are entitled to receive sufficient information in a way they can understand about the proposed treatments, the possible alternatives and any substantial risk or risks which may be special in kind or magnitude or special to the patient, so that they can make a balanced judgement. (UK Health Dept. 19.2.99. HSC 1999/031)

Professor Crispian Scully CBE
 Eastman Dental Institute for Oral Health Care Sciences
 and International Centres for Excellence in Dentistry
 University of London
 256, Gray's Inn Road
 London WC1X 8LD
 www.eastman.ucl.ac.uk
 February 2005