



Dry Mouth



Signs, Symptoms and Management

- Saliva is produced by salivary glands in your mouth and keeps your mouth moist.
- When there isn't enough saliva in your mouth, it becomes dry.

Saliva is very important!

- Keeps the mouth moist.
- Helps with swallowing and speech.
- Protects teeth from decay.
- Saliva contains enzymes and antibodies that fight harmful bacteria.
- It provides calcium and minerals that strengthen and repair tooth enamel, keeping teeth healthy.

Causes of a dry mouth

- **Dehydration:** Loss of water from the body due to conditions like fever, excessive sweating, vomiting (being sick), blood loss, or burns.



- **Medications:** Over 500 medications can cause dry mouth as a side effect. These include medications for depression, nerve pain, high blood pressure, anxiety, antihistamines (used for allergies), decongestants, muscle relaxants, and pain relief.



- **Health Conditions:** Certain health issues can lead to dry mouth, such as
 - Diabetes
 - Cystic Fibrosis
 - Rheumatoid Arthritis
 - Sjogren's Syndrome: A condition specifically causing dry mouth and dry eyes.

Symptoms of Dry Mouth

- Mouth feels dry
- Pain while eating, swallowing or speaking
- Burning sensation in the mouth

Signs of Dry Mouth

- Reduced saliva
- Frothy, stringy saliva
- Dry and cracked lips and tongue
- Fungal infections



How to manage Dry Mouth

- Taking small sips of cold water or sucking on ice chips (if it is safe) can help keep your mouth wet.



- Use water-based mouth gels or sprays



- Non-foaming (Sodium Lauryl Sulphate-free) toothpastes can also be helpful and are available at local chemists or online retailers. A list of resources can be found here

<https://www.whittington.nhs.uk/document.ashx?id=14373>

- Avoid foods that are acidic, spicy, salty and sugary.



Top Tips for good oral health

- Brush teeth **twice a day for 2 minutes** with a fluoride toothpaste. **Spit out toothpaste – do not rinse!**
- **Cut back on sugary food and drink.** Choose water or plain milk instead.
- Visit the dentist for **regular check-ups.**



Accessing community dental services

High needs patients may be referred to the Whittington Health NHS Community Dental Services. Please visit the website for details on eligibility and referral form pathway. <https://www.whittington.nhs.uk/default.asp?c=10989>



Further information

Contact the Oral Health Promotion Service at farheen.naqvi@nhs.net

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please email whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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Date published: 10/12/2024
Review date: 10/12/2026
Ref: SC/Dent/DryMouth/01

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