

# Advice for dry mouth symptoms

If your saliva production is poor you may experience a dry mouth (xerostomia). This can lead to an unpleasant taste and coated tongue, increased dental decay, swallowing difficulties and dryness and cracking of tongue and lips.

Certain foods can affect saliva production. Ask your GP for a referral to a dietitian who can advise.

## **What may help:**

- Your GP or consultant doctor may need to change your medications, as dry mouth symptoms can often be a side effect of medication.
- Drink plenty of fluids— up to two litres every day. Taking frequent sips of water helps prevent the mouth from drying. Sucking ice cubes may also help. Speak to your GP or SLT if swallowing difficulties are making it hard for you to drink enough fluids.
- Use a small water spray throughout the day.
- Try moist food with plenty of gravy or sauces and melt butter over vegetables. Cut up food small to make it easier to chew. Take sips of water in between bites of food.
- Sugar-free gum or boiled sweets may help to encourage your saliva production.
- Avoid sugary foods and drinks that may damage your teeth. Remember to brush your teeth regularly with fluoride toothpaste.
- Using lip balm or petroleum jelly to moisten lips, and removing dentures at night
- Avoid alcohol (including mouthwash containing alcohol) and very hot drinks.
- Your GP may be able to prescribe saliva replacement gels or sprays to help with dry mouth (such as Biotene, BioXtra or Glandosane).

*Speech and Language Therapy*

*Community Gateway: 0300 0032 144*

