



# macedon family dentistry

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## **XEROSTOMIA (Dry Mouth) PATIENT INFORMATION**

### **DEFINITION**

Xerostomia (pronounced "zero-sto'me-ah") is the medical word for dry mouth due to decreased or absent saliva. This problem is quite common and is caused by a variety of medical conditions and medications.

### **HELPFUL HINTS**

- Sip cool water throughout the day, let ice chips melt in mouth (don't chew ice!)
  - most people do not drink enough fluids and this can contribute to a dry mouth
- Try drinking milk with meals
  - milk has moisturizing properties and helps some people to swallow their food
- Use a cool air humidifier in the bedroom - clean and change water daily
  - start the humidifier an hour or two before bedtime and let it run through the night
- Avoid alcohol and alcohol-containing mouthwashes
  - alcohol has a drying effect and can also irritate the tissues
- Restrict caffeine intake - as it also has a drying effect, use caffeine-free tea, coffee and sodas
- Use sugar-free candy, gum and beverages
  - acidic candies (and foods) can cause a sore mouth and contribute to tooth decay
  - Some popular sour candies like Starburst, Warheads, Atomic Warheads, Laffy Taffy, Bubble Tape, and Sour Skittles are highly acidic in nature.
- Use Vaseline on lips frequently during the day and especially at bedtime
- If possible, sleep on your side in order to reduce mouth breathing
- See your dentist frequently
  - people with dry mouth are more prone to oral yeast infections as well as cavities
  - report any unusual oral soreness or burning sensations to your dentist
  - excellent oral hygiene is necessary to prevent cavities and gum disease

## COMMERCIAL SALIVA SUBSTITUTES

Saliva substitutes are designed to replace your own saliva. They are available without a prescription and can be found (or ordered from) most pharmacies. They can be used as often as needed and do not have side effects. Some examples include:

### LIQUIDS:

- Moi-Stir (Kingswood Labs) - pump spray & 75 ct. box rayon swabsticks
- MouthKote (Parnell) - 8 oz pump spray
- Optimoist (Colgate Oral Pharm) - 2 oz pump spray, 12 oz refill (similar to Xero-Lube)
- Xerolube (Colgate Oral Pharm)
- Salivart Synthetic Saliva (Gebauer) - 25 or 75 g can with nitrogen propellant
- Saliva Substitute (Roxane) = 120 ml squeeze bottle
- Boost (CariFree) - 12 ml pump spray bottle (order direct at [www.carifree.com](http://www.carifree.com))

### TABLETS:

- Salix SST (saliva substitute tablets - Scandinavian Pure & Naturals)
  - 120 tablets per box, cost \$11.50
  - easy to carry, pleasant flavor

### MOISTURIZING GELS:

- Oral Balance (Laclede) - 1.5 oz tube
  - moisturizing gel, especially useful at nighttime
  - spread on tissues and under dentures as needed for long-lasting effects

### TOOTHPASTE:

- Biotene Toothpaste (Laclede) - 4.5 oz tube
  - widely accepted by xerostomic patients, contains fluoride
  - <http://www.biotene.com/>
- Prevident 5000 - prescribed by your dentist to prevent cavities

### XYLITOL

Xylitol is an artificial sweetener that has been shown to help prevent cavities. Using xylitol-containing mints and gum has the added benefit of stimulating saliva production.

- Xylitol Chewing Gum (Epic)
- Ice Cubes Chewing Gum (Hershey)
- Ice Breakers Mints (Hershey)

*NOTE:* If the above suggestions and products do not alleviate your symptoms, ask your dental practitioner about suitable prescription alternatives