

Dry mouth.

A dry mouth is very common in cancer treatment. It can be temporary or permanent. Having a dry mouth can make eating and talking uncomfortable. It's important to keep trying to eat, to maintain body weight and meet nutrition needs.

Dental hygiene

Saliva protects our teeth, so having a dry mouth can increase the chance of getting a tooth infection or decay. Regular check ups with the dentist are very important.

Most mouthwashes have alcohol, which makes dry mouths worse. Try one of these mouthwash options to help keep your mouth clean:

- ½ tsp salt in a cup of water
- 1 tsp baking soda in a cup of water
- ½ tsp salt + ½ tsp baking soda in a cup of water

Always rinse with plain water afterwards.



Artificial saliva

Artificial saliva products are available at the pharmacy and help moisten the mouth. Their effect may last only for a short time, so it is best to use them just before meals and at night to prevent the dryness from disturbing sleep. Try out a few kinds to see what suits best (e.g. gel, spray, pastille or tablet).

Eating with a dry mouth

A dry mouth can affect our appetite, the taste of foods, and swallowing. Try these tips:

- ✓ Sip water throughout the day.
- ✓ Try sucking on sugar-free lollies or chewing gum to stimulate saliva.
- ✓ Sip water often during a meal.
- ✓ Include plenty of sauces and gravy with meals.
- ✓ Eat foods with a high fluid content, such as jelly, soups and casseroles, yoghurt etc.
- ✓ Avoid dry and 'thick' foods such as biscuits, crackers and crisps.
- ✓ Try eating lots of small meals or snacks if a big meal is hard to manage.

