

Living with Dry Mouth



Your Guide to Optimal Oral Health and Comfort

In collaboration with
GP, Dr Sarah Jarvis
and Dental Therapist,
Miranda Pascucci



What is dry mouth?

Are you constantly reaching for water, battling that parched feeling in your mouth? If so, know that you are not alone!

Millions of people suffer daily with the uncomfortable and, at times, debilitating symptoms of dry mouth. In fact, research¹ shows that around one in five people in the UK experience dry mouth.

Also known as xerostomia, dry mouth occurs when salivary glands do not make enough saliva. There are several factors that can cause it and others that can worsen the symptoms.

Common symptoms of dry mouth include:



Persistent dryness or feeling of stickiness in the mouth



Changed sense of taste



Frequent thirst



Thick or stringy saliva



Bad breath



Difficulty chewing or speaking



Dry or sore throat



Cracked lips

¹ TePe - Mouth Dryness in UK, web panel questionnaire study with 1000 respondents, Transvector, April 2023.



Oral health brand **TePe** is working with GP, Dr Sarah Jarvis and Dental Therapist, **Miranda Pascucci** to raise awareness about dry mouth. Read on for expert insight into managing the symptoms...



Dr Sarah Jarvis MBE has over 26 years' experience as a GP.

Dr Jarvis explains; "Dry mouth can leave your mouth feeling dry, it may feel like sandpaper or as though your mouth has been filled with cotton wool.

"It can also be sore, sometimes making your lips feel dry and chapped and can even disrupt your sleep or affect your ability to speak.

"Dry mouth is a symptom of other conditions. Although it can be managed and there are ways to alleviate the discomfort and help reduce its impact."

A life with a dry mouth



26%

say dry mouth makes it **difficult to speak.**



From those suffering more severely,

35%

say it **affects their sleep.**



1 in 5 suffer from dry mouth.



62%

do not talk about their dry mouth condition



33%

of those affected in their daily life say that their **self confidence is negatively affected.**



Certain **illnesses, medications** and **menopause** can cause dry mouth.

TePe - Mouth Dryness in UK, web panel questionnaire study with 1000 respondents, Transvector, April 2023

Medical conditions associated with dry mouth

Dry mouth isn't just inconvenient and uncomfortable. It can also be a symptom of underlying medical conditions including dementia, Alzheimer's disease or even autoimmune diseases, such as Sjogren's syndrome.

Quite often it is the use of certain medications that is the cause, due to the medication's anticholinergic effects and the impact of these medications on saliva production.

Over the counter and prescription drugs may lead to dry mouth by reducing the amount of saliva produced. Likewise, polypharmacy (taking more than 2-3 medications) is a common cause of dry mouth. This is often the case as we get older, and more medications are taken.

Antidepressants, antihistamines and diuretics all reduce the presence of saliva whilst other medications can make us more prone to dehydration.

Understanding the connections between dry mouth and medical conditions is vital for effective treatment and improved quality of life.



Diabetes

High blood sugar levels lead to increased urination, dehydrating the body and leaving the mouth parched. Additionally, some diabetes medications can exacerbate dry mouth due to their diuretic properties.



Alzheimer's disease

As Alzheimer's disease progresses, memory and cognitive function decline. Individuals may forget to drink fluids, or simply not recognise the body's signals of thirst. Furthermore, several medications used to treat Alzheimer's can cause dry mouth as a side effect.

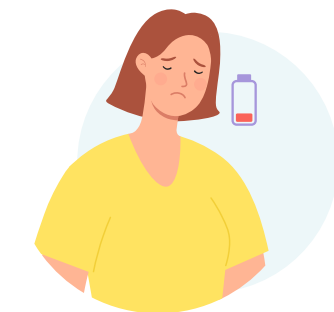
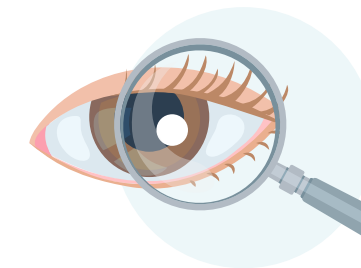
Parkinson's disease

Primarily affecting movement and impacting the nervous system, which regulates involuntary functions like heart rate, breathing, and digestion, Parkinson's disease can also impair saliva production, leading to dry mouth.



Sjögren's syndrome

An autoimmune disease that attacks the body's moisture-producing glands, Sjögren's syndrome can lead to dry eyes and dry mouth, causing significant discomfort, inflammation and reducing the amount of saliva produced.



Cancer treatment

Chemotherapy, radiotherapy and hematopoietic stem cell transplantation are all linked to dry mouth, usually due to salivary gland damage. This may repair once treatment has been completed.



Menopause

Dry mouth is connected to menopause as the reduction of oestrogen and progesterone in the body may cause reduced saliva production.

If you're battling persistent dry mouth, it might be time to dig deeper. The first step is to make an appointment with your doctor or a healthcare professional who can help to identify the cause and best treatment options available.

Lifestyle factors linked to dry mouth

Did you know?

Dry mouth may reflect underlying lifestyle habits. Understanding these influences can help you to take control, keeping your mouth moist and smile healthy and vibrant.



Certain foods and drinks can make dry mouth worse. Excessive caffeine and alcohol consumption, sugary food and drinks, spicy or salty foods and anything that dries out the mouth like rough or dry foods.



Stress activates the body's "fight or flight" response, which is controlled by the sympathetic nervous system. This can inhibit the production of saliva, as can the release of stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline.



It may sound simple, but not getting enough fluids can exacerbate dry mouth. Ideally, aim to drink two litres water per day to avoid dehydration and improve dry mouth symptoms.



Breathing through your mouth instead of your nose can lead to dry mouth because it bypasses the natural humidification process that occurs when air passes through the nasal passages. Longer term, this can signal the body to produce less saliva.



Smoking and vaping reduce saliva production and can worsen dry mouth. Giving up smoking is the best option for many health benefits, including improvements in dry mouth.



Many older people experience symptoms of dry mouth as they age. This may be due to changes in how the body processes medicine, poor nutrition or long-term health problems.

Dental care and dry mouth

Saliva has a very important role to play for oral hygiene. The saliva helps to cleanse the mouth from bacteria which prevents plaque from building up on and around the teeth.

With less saliva, the teeth become more vulnerable to cavities, and the soft tissues in your mouth become sensitive and susceptible to infection.

Using additional fluoride products and being meticulous with your oral hygiene is even more important if you have a dry mouth.



Miranda Pascucci, Dental Therapist for **TePe**, shares her tips on maintaining a healthy dental care routine to reduce the impact of dry mouth.



Use a gentle toothpaste.

Some individuals with dry mouth may find brushing their teeth uncomfortable, like the feeling of something burning their mouths. A gentle toothpaste, such as the TePe Pure range, which is free from sodium lauryl sulphate (SLS), can help to ease the unpleasant feeling.



Use a tongue cleaner.

This handy tool helps to remove plaque build-up from the surface of your tongue.

Use a moisturising mouthwash.

Mouthwashes containing alcohol can lead to dry mouth because alcohol is a potent drying agent. Instead, choose a mouthwash designed for dry mouth, such as TePe Hydrating Mouthwash, which contains moisturising ingredients that can help to alleviate discomfort and promote saliva production.



Brush teeth twice a day.

Adults should use a toothpaste that contains between 1350 - 1450ppm fluoride, which helps to protect the teeth by strengthening the tooth enamel.

Clean between the gaps.

At least once each day, clean between the gaps in your teeth to clean the 40% of the tooth that is missed through regular brushing alone. Use dental floss if you have tight spaces between your teeth, or TePe Interdental Brushes if the gaps are wider.



Beat dry mouth!

Ease the feeling of dry mouth with TePe's oral care solutions.



TePe Hydrating Mouthwash

Suitable for dry, sensitive mouths, this gentle formula soothes and moisturises the mouth.

Available in a mild apple-peppermint flavour and unflavoured, the hydrating oral care solution contains 910ppm fluoride to provide effective protection against cavities - a crucial defence against the increased oral health risks associated with dry mouth.

TePe Hydrating Mouth Gel

For dry mouth sufferers seeking immediate hydration, TePe Hydrating Mouth Gel offers a gentle, moisturising solution.

With a convenient pump dispenser to facilitate easy application, TePe Hydrating Mouth Gel is an ideal on-the-go solution.

It comes in two varieties, mild apple-peppermint or unflavoured, soothing the mouth and providing comfort from dry mouth.



TePe Hydrating Mouth Spray

For instant freshness from dry mouth, try TePe Hydrating Mouth Spray. Great for on-the-go it stimulates saliva production and leaves a moisturised, refreshed feeling.

The mild apple-peppermint spray also contains fluoride to protect the teeth from cavities as well as urea, a humectant found in saliva.


TePe Pure™

The TePe Pure™ Toothpaste range is made with minimal but carefully selected ingredients, specifically for people who experience sensitive gums and dry mouth.

It's the perfect choice for a more comfortable brushing experience since it doesn't contain SLS, a known irritant that can irritate sensitive oral tissue.

It also contains no dye, no foaming agents and no preservatives. Not even flavour, or just a hint of peppermint - choose the one that suits you best!





Practical tips for managing dry mouth

Tired of battling dry mouth? The good news is, there are practical tips that can help to reduce the discomfort of dry mouth. Dr Sarah Jarvis explains more...

Stay hydrated

Take frequent sips of cold water and drink plenty of non-alcoholic fluids throughout the day. Eating foods with high water content, such as watermelon and cucumber, can also help to provide temporary relief from dry mouth.



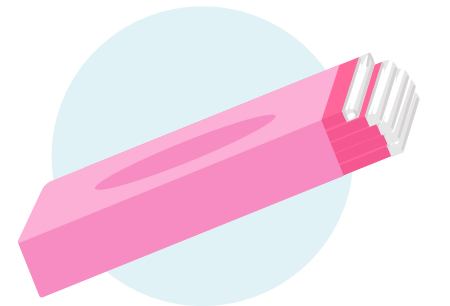
Avoid certain beverages

Limit your consumption of beverages that can contribute to dehydration, such as alcohol.



Chew sugar-free gum

Some individuals find relief from dry mouth by chewing on sugar-free gum which can help to stimulate saliva production.



Reduce consumption of irritant foods

Some foods will have an impact on saliva production or naturally make your mouth dry when eating them. Instead, opt for nourishing, soothing foods with higher water content like soups, stews, smoothies and salad rather than spicy and salty foods or drying breads, crispbreads and cereals.



By following these tips, you can effectively care for dry mouth and ease the symptoms. This will help you to enjoy a more comfortable day-to-day life whilst taking care of your long-term oral health and wellbeing.



Find out more

For over 50 years, TePe has been developing oral hygiene solutions which promote long-term oral health and quality of life for people worldwide.

For more advice about managing the symptoms of dry mouth, visit www.tepe.com/uk

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