

Patient Care Services
300 Pasteur Drive
Stanford, CA 94305

Tips for Dry Mouth and/or Thick Saliva Patient Education

- Drink 8 to 12 cups of caffeine-free liquids every day. Drinking plenty of fluid can help loosen mucus.
- Mouth Care is KEY! Keep your mouth clean by rinsing after each meal and snack. Brush your teeth according to the directions given to you by your doctor or nurse.
- For thick saliva, try sipping 100% pure papaya juice. Papaya contains natural substances that will help thin out your saliva.
- Keep a bottle of water, or other fluid, with you at all times, especially when you leave home. Sip on this all day long.
- When eating, take small bites and chew food completely.
- Eat soft, moist foods that are cool or room temperature, for example, canned fruit, yogurt, or pudding.
- Add broth, sauces, gravy, or soup to soften and moisten foods.
- Use a blender to mash or blend fruits and vegetables, or really anything you need to.
- Try casseroles that contain a lot of liquid, such as those made with soup or a sauce.
- Try soft, cooked chicken and fish; thinned cereals, such as oatmeal made with plenty of water or milk; popsicles, shakes, smoothies, and slushies; warm soups and stews.
- Avoid very hot foods, but make sure your foods are fully cooked. Cool your hot foods to a warm temperature before eating.
- Use yogurt, juice, or jelly to make foods go down a dry throat easier.
- Instead of butter or margarine, try using a little olive oil, canola oil, avocado oil or almond oil to make foods slippery and easier to swallow.
- Try sucking on frozen fruit. Frozen grapes, wedges of cantaloupe, peach slices, and watermelon work well.
- Try sucking on ice chips. DO NOT chew ice – this can damage your teeth.
- Ask your pharmacist (and nurse) about saliva substitutes, mouth moisturizers and other products made especially for a dry mouth. Examples of these products include saliva stimulators such as Salagen® (pilocarpine hydrochloride); saliva replacers such as Xero-Lube®, Salivart®, Mouth Kote®, Moi-Stir®, Orex®, Salix, Optimoist®, Sage Moist Plus® spray, and Gelclair®; and mouth moisturizers such as Oral Balance® and Sage Mouth Moisturizer®.

Avoid the following foods which can make a dry mouth worse:

- Foods and beverages with caffeine such as coffee, colas, and chocolate.
- Alcoholic beverages including beer, wine, and mixed drinks.
- Dry foods including tough meats, raw vegetables, breads, pretzels, rice, chips, muffins, and cake.
- Commercial mouthwashes! These contain alcohol which will dry the mouth further.

E. Connor, RD, CSO
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