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Oral Wellness Newsletter



Got dry mouth? Your medications could be why

What you put into your mouth and body can have a huge impact on your oral health. There are hundreds of medicines that can cut down on how much saliva you make — which can lead to dry mouth¹. When left untreated, dry mouth can make you more prone to tooth decay, gum disease and other dental issues. Some medications known to cause dry mouth include antihistamines, decongestants, anticholinergics, anti-anxiety and antidepressants.

To reduce the risk of dry mouth, it's good to practice good oral hygiene and visit your dentist regularly for cleanings and exams. You can also:

- Sip water often, especially during meals, to make chewing and swallowing easier.
- Suck on small ice chips to increase moisture in your mouth.
- Avoid drinks with caffeine, such as coffee, tea and some sodas.
- Chew sugarless gum or suck on sugarless hard candy to stimulate saliva flow.
- Limit tobacco products, which reduce saliva flow and worsen dry mouth.
- Reduce alcohol consumption, as it can lead to dehydration.
- Use a humidifier while you sleep to help moisten the air and prevent your mouth from drying out.

Learn more about the link between antidepressants and dry mouth in this [article](#), written by our Chief Dental Officer, Dr. Roosevelt Allen, DDS, MAGD, ABGD.



What is TMJ?

The two temporomandibular joints (TMJ) that connect your lower jaw to your skull help us chew food, speak, swallow and yawn. They move the jaw up and down, side to side and forward and backward. But these jaw joints can also have complications that result in pain and soreness.

TMJ disorders often have pain in the jaw joint and surrounding areas that limit jaw movement. Some of the major known causes for TMJ include:

- Autoimmune diseases.
- Infections.
- Injuries to the jaw area.
- Dental procedures where the mouth is open for a long time.
- An insert of a breathing tube before surgery.
- Various forms of arthritis.
- Other genetic, hormonal and environmental factors.

TMJ symptoms can look like other [health-related issues](#) such as sinus infections, abscessed teeth, Lyme disease and tumors — which is why it's important to discuss health concerns with a clinician.

Most mild symptoms can be addressed with [home therapy](#), but constant and painful symptoms need to be treated by a medical doctor or dentist. If you struggle with TMJ pain, you are not alone — between 10 to 35 million people in the U.S. experience problems with their jaw joints at any given time².

Think you might have a TMJ disorder? [Explore possible symptoms](#)



High blood sugar levels can damage your eyes

For the 37 million Americans living with diabetes, the need for a complete, yearly eye exam is critical. Diabetic eye disease is one of the leading causes of blindness and often has no warning signs. Approximately one-third of Americans with diabetes can develop retinopathy caused by high blood sugar levels that may damage the blood vessels in the back of the eye (retina)³.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the following eye health routines for diabetics:

- Get your eyes checked at least once a year so your eye doctor can detect any problems early when they're most treatable.
- Maintain your blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol levels to lower your risk for eye diseases and vision loss.
- Limit tobacco and alcohol consumption, as they can worsen blood sugar control in diabetic patients.
- Increase your physical activity to help control blood sugar levels and reduce the risk of complications.
- Ask your eye doctor for a referral to diabetes self-management education and support (DSMES) services to learn more about preventing vision loss and total blindness.

[Learn more](#) about the importance of regular eye exams and their role in detecting diabetes and other health conditions.



Holiday Trivia

In Season 6 of Seinfeld, who was asking everyone at a dentist Thanksgiving party to diagnose their tooth pain?

- A. Elaine
- B. Kramer
- C. Jerry

Trivia answer: C

Sources:

- [1] Dry Mouth (Xerostomia); Cleveland Clinic, 2023. Retrieved October 2023.
- [2] TMJ Basics; The TMJ Association, Ltd., 2021. Retrieved October 2023.
- [3] Diabetes; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022. Retrieved October 2023.

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