



Newsletter Articles

Why is dry mouth so bad for teeth?



This article explains why a dry mouth is bad for teeth.

Why saliva matters

Saliva (spit) keeps the mouth wet, helps digest food, repairs teeth, fights germs and helps you taste. Without enough saliva:

- Food and plaque stick to teeth.
- Bad germs grow.
- Acid from drinks is not washed away. Teeth dissolve and gums get sore.
- You must clean very well, including between teeth.

Causes and what to do

- **Not drinking enough water:** sip plain tap water often. Drink more when active or sweating. Beer, wine, coffee and energy drinks do not count.
- **Dry, dusty work:** improve the air or work conditions if you can.
- **Caffeine, smoking, alcohol and drugs:** cut down.
- **Medicines:** many cause dry mouth. Ask your doctor to review them.
- **Asthma puffers:** rinse with water after use.
- **Breathing through the mouth:** see a specialist about a blocked nose or teeth position.
- **Damaged saliva glands** (for example Sjögren's syndrome or radiation treatment): sip water, use dry mouth gels, have less sugar and acid, and use good fluoride products.
- **Getting older:** saliva goes down. Keep up good dental care.

Use a straw for sugary or acidic drinks.