
Nutrition for Dry Mouth and Thick Saliva

It's important to take good care of your mouth before, during, and after your cancer treatment. Here are some tips to help if you or a loved one are experiencing dry mouth or thick saliva.

Nutrition Tips:

- A dry mouth can cause cavities and infections. Make sure you have regular dental care before, during, and after your cancer treatment.
- Keep your mouth clean by rinsing with non-alcoholic mouthwash, baking soda and salt water rinses, or a rinse provided by your healthcare provider after each meal or snack. You may also brush your teeth, if tolerated.
- Drink 8 to 12 cups of caffeine-free liquid each day. This may help loosen mucous.
- Keep a water bottle with you and sip from it all day long.
- Sip on 100% pure papaya juice. It contains substances which may help thin saliva.
- Use a straw to drink liquids.
- Eat soft, moist foods which are cool or room temperature. Cool hot foods before eating.
- Soften foods such as bread or potatoes with milk.
- Use a blender for fruits and vegetables.
- Try soft-cooked chicken or fish.
- Thin cereals with plenty of fluid.
- Try popsicles, smoothies, and milkshakes if they do not cause pain.
- Add broth, sauces, gravy, or some type of liquid to moisten food.
- Use yogurt, non-acidic juice, or jelly to help food go down more easily.
- Sip warm, caffeine-free tea (i.e. tea with honey).
- Add oil to your food to help it “slide down” easier.
- Try sucking on frozen fruit including slices grapes, peaches, or watermelon.
- Ice chips may soothe a dry mouth. However, *do not chew ice* as it can damage your teeth.

Avoid the following foods or products as they may make dry mouth worse:

- Caffeinated beverages.
- Dry foods including tough meats, raw vegetables, breads, pretzels, rice, chips, muffins, and cakes.
- Mouthwashes that contain alcohol.

Call your medical care team if:

- You have a severely dry or sore mouth for more than 3 days.
- Your lips are dry, cracked, or bleeding.
- You have mouth sores which are preventing you from eating.
- You notice white patches in your mouth – this may be an infection which requires medication.
- You have difficulty breathing due to dry mouth or throat.