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# Nutrition for Dry Mouth and Thick Saliva

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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.

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**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.