

Dry Mouth: What Actually Helps

The most common reason a careful brusher keeps getting cavities. It rarely feels like thirst.

Saliva is your mouth's defense. It washes, buffers acid and carries the minerals that repair early damage. When flow drops, decay can move quickly even in someone who brushes well. Medication is the leading cause, and it is rarely just one drug.

1. Start with your medication list

- Bring the real list to your prescriber. Ask whether anything can be moved to the morning, reduced, or swapped within the same class.
- **Never stop or change a medication on your own.**
- Bring the same list to us. It often explains the whole picture.

2. Run a humidifier at night

- The highest-yield change available to almost anyone living in Las Vegas, and the least effort.
- Eight hours of moist air against the eight hours your glands are offline.

3. Xylitol gum or lozenges

- About five times a day, and **after meals is the best timing.**
- Chewing is the only lever that reliably raises flow on demand.
- Xylitol cannot be fermented into acid by the bacteria that cause decay.

4. Remineralize every night

- High-fluoride paste or a nano-hydroxyapatite product, last thing at night.
- **Spit, do not rinse.**
- We run both tracks here. If you would rather avoid fluoride, the nano-hydroxyapatite protocol is a real option, not a consolation prize.

5. Clean between the teeth

- This is the half saliva cannot do for you.
- Minerals and buffering do not diffuse through thick plaque, so the surfaces that decay are usually the ones floss is not reaching.

6. Get your nose working

- If you wake with a dry mouth and an open jaw, the drink and the toothpaste are downstream of the real problem.
- Dr. Lee-Mirzayan is certified in myofunctional therapy and handles this directly, including when an ENT referral is the right next step.

7. Sip water, and only water

- Constant sipping of anything sweet or acidic is worse than the dryness it is treating. It is about time, not quantity.
- Plain water through the day, and a glass at the bedside.

8. Alkaline water, after meals

- Worth a try. With low flow, plaque stays acidic long after eating.
- Be clear-eyed: a gentle effect, and the evidence is thin. Its advantage is that people keep doing it.

9. Gel or spray overnight

- Saliva substitutes coat and hold overnight in a way water cannot.
- For genuine gland hypofunction there are prescription medications that stimulate the glands. Worth raising with your physician if the dryness is severe.

10. Two things to drop

- **Alcohol-based mouthwash** and **SLS toothpaste.** Both dry and irritate the tissue you are trying to protect.
- And come in every three or four months instead of six while we get this under control, so early damage is caught while it can still be reversed rather than drilled.

How we check it: a saliva test measures flow, buffering capacity and resting pH, which are three different things. The feeling of dryness and the measurement do not always match, and treating the measurement is what changes the outcome.

Questions? Call 702-734-0776

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The full article is at lasvegasdentistry.com/articles/dry-mouth/. General information, not a substitute for an exam. Never stop or change a prescribed medication without speaking to the prescriber.