



Central West Specialists

Ear, Nose & Throat Specialist

Taste, Dry Mouth & Bad Breath

Saliva is important for taste, speech, chewing and swallowing. Lack of saliva is very uncomfortable and is often associated with halitosis or bad breath.

Taste Disorders;

These can be a sign of a vitamin deficiency; vitamin A, B Complex, iron and Zinc have been implicated. Drugs such as Chloral Hydrate, Catopril, Enalapril, Flagyl have been known to cause this as well as Tinidazole, Betaloc, Bactrim, Brufen and Dalacin C.

Causes of Dry Mouth;

Medication: Tricyclic anti-depressants, antihistamine, tranquilizers and anti-cholinergic drugs.

1) General Body Causes: Dehydration may cause a dry mouth eg. Diabetes, heart and kidney disease, menopause and old age.

2) Psychological Factors: Anxiety

3) Infections: Mumps, other viral infections of the parotid

4) Sjogren's Syndrome: Dry mouth, dry eyes and often arthritis.

5) Radiotherapy

Halitosis (Bad Breath);

This is a common condition and often associated with a dry mouth. Common causes usually arise from the mouth but occasionally general body disorders are the cause.

1. Local Factors: On waking due to decreased saliva production while asleep. A soft coat of bacteria and dead skin cells develop on the tongue and teeth and usually disappears with eating and cleaning. It may be worse in the elderly, smoker or if dentures are worn.

2. Chronic Dental Disease

3. Food: Especially meat, fish and dairy produce, which contain sulphur, and garlic, onion and alcohol.

4. Mouth infections:

5. Other Causes: Sinus infections, tonsillitis and bronchitis.

6. General Factors: Diabetes, kidney disease, chest infections, liver disease and drug therapy.

Treatment for Bad Breath & Dry Mouth

1. Dental hygiene – Flossing and brushing.

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2. Relief of dryness: increase your fluid intake, methyl cellulose mouth wash and yoghurt. Avoid drinks with high sugar content
3. Treat infections: such as candida (thrush).
4. Mouth washes after brushing.
5. Medical treatment to increase saliva: Pilocarpine

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