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Episode 9: Dry Mouth: When SPIT Does Not Happen_009

I feel you buddy. I have super dry tongue look. Actually I have to wet it manually every hour. It's a real nightmare. Do you suffer from a constant dry mouth Find out more about why spit does not necessarily happen on This Old Tooth.

Hello everyone, you are listening to episode number nine of This Old Tooth, a podcast devoted to providing you with honest agenda-free information about how you can get and keep a beautiful healthy smile for life. I am your host, Dr. Lisa Germain. Today I will be discussing the potential causes of dry mouth, the problems that it could be creating for you and what you can do to remedy the problem. Now, one of the worst things about having a dry mouth is that it gives you bad breath. So this episode is the third in a 10 part series on bad breath. But I felt that the topic deserved some special attention to detail because it can create so many other problems as well.

Our bodies produce about four pints of spit or saliva per day. Its main function is to begin to break down the food we eat before it reaches our stomach and hence it is necessary for digestion. It also keeps our lips, cheeks, tongues, and throats comfortable. It allows us to taste and enjoy our food and it helps us with speech and without it, we would have a lot of trouble swallowing. And what would a kiss be like without it Yuck? Have you ever wondered why your breath smells so bad when you wake up in the morning? Yep. morning breath is pretty much a given, but here's why it happens. While you're sleeping peacefully, The bacteria in your mouth are anything but. They are wide awake and they take advantage of the fact that your production of saliva slows way down during sleep and since your saliva helps clean your mouth, your breath might have a bad odor until you brush your teeth the next morning.

Morning breath is totally normal, but it actually has its own name and it's called morning halitosis. In addition, if you forget to brush and floss your teeth the night before, the lingering debris and food particles have had a chance to break down into some pretty nasty odors.

Mouth breathing, sleep apnea, and snoring may make your saliva evaporate, which can dry out your mouth and reduce your mouth's ability to rinse away food particles. Some people breath through their mouths while they sleep, but many people find that they do it during exercise as well. In fact, dental

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hygiene in athletes is currently being studied by experts. One 2015 study by researchers from Germany found that the more time people spend in training, the more likely they were to have cavities and the scientists speculated that the reduced salivary flow during exercise may play a role. Now that's not a reason to stop exercising, of course. Just make sure you stay hydrated during a workout and replenish your fluids afterward.

Excess coffee consumption as well as alcohol, smoking, vaping and chewing tobacco are all things that will dry your mouth out and cause bad breath as well. Reducing consumption of these products and paying close attention to cleaning your teeth, gums, and tongue will all help the dry mouth condition that occurs from these substances.

Fear and anxiety are other things that can cause you to get a dry mouth, but fortunately that is temporary. Our bodies respond to those things with what is called the fight or flight response and along with your sweaty palms comes a decrease in saliva. You will notice that once you are able to calm down, this will go away by itself.

So you see spit is important to all of us and is dentists, we know that spit is truly the water of life for our teeth and gums.

We know from research and experience that when a person's spit goes away amongst other problems that they can develop, it causes your teeth to decay. You may not have had a cavity for years and yet when you go to the dentist, they give you the bad news that your mouth is falling apart seemingly overnight. In order to understand why this happens, you need to look at what is in your saliva. Well, first of all, we know it's mostly water and that will help flush away the acid that causes cavities, but saliva also contains the minerals, calcium, and phosphate which help re mineralize your teeth, making them stronger and more resistant to tooth decay. The medical name for dry mouth is Xersotomia. This is really not a disease unto itself. It is merely a condition, but it is something that should not be ignored because if you have a dry mouth, it could be indicative of a much more serious underlying condition.

Now you may be asking yourself, why should I worry? I can spit with the best of them! But the amount of spit you have changes with age, medical conditions and with many medications. Most adults begin to have a significant reduction in saliva volume in their fifties and sixties and this continues to decline throughout life. This is also the time in life when many people start taking medications that will dry their mouth out as well. The number of medications that cause dry mouth is staggering. Common medications to treat allergies, asthma, pain, high blood pressure, depression, sleep disorders, add and ADHD, anxiety, COPD, diet drugs and many other disorders cause dry mouth. It is not uncommon for me to see patients taking five or six medications with this side effect. Additionally, scary is the fact that patients may have 50% or more reduction in the volume of their saliva and be totally unaware of it.

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It is estimated that there are between 400 and 500 medications that cause Xerostomia and in my show notes today I have included a PDF download for you that lists most of these as well as many over the counter medications that cause dry mouth. If you are unsure, you can check with your pharmacist to find out whether the prescription medications that you are taking, may be drying out your saliva as well. If you have a dry mouth, I urge you not to ignore it. It can be the first sign that you might have an underlying more serious medical problem. Patients who have a dry mouth from an underlying medical condition will often complain of difficulty swallowing, difficulty eating, chewing and speaking. Some patients have extreme amounts of discomfort and inflammation of the tissues inside their mouth, um, and they usually have bad breath. Xerostomia is seen often in patients with poorly controlled diabetes.

In addition, it is quite commonly seen in many autoimmune diseases as well as other chronic diseases such as Sjogren's syndrome, Sarcoidosis, Myasthenia Gravis, Lupus, Amyloidosis and HIV. It occurs in up to 60% of bone marrow transplant recipients and it is commonly seen in patients with gastric esophageal reflux disease or GERD. In addition, accidental or surgical trauma as well as radiation to the salivary glands can definitely interfere with the body's production of saliva. It is crucial for patients who have a dry mouth to consult with their physician to find out why. While the damage to your salivary glands could be permanent, the symptoms can be relieved using rinses that actually replace your saliva. If you are caring for an elderly relative and you notice that their breath is foul, they may be suffering from dry mouth and not even know it. Your dentist and your physician or that of your loved one should work together to try to figure out what is causing the Xerostomia and what is the best treatment for that condition.

I have promised you only agenda-free information and I'm not endorsing any specific product here, but I have included in my show notes a PDF of the commercially available saliva substitutes. Just for your reference, one of the things that I feel is part of my mission is to give you as much information as I possibly can so that you can ask intelligent questions to your physician and to your dentist so that you get the care you need.

And now for a fun fact, in 2003 the toothbrush was chosen as the number one invention people can't live without beating out cell phones and cars. It's a small wonder that there's not an app for that. Or maybe one day we'll be able to say, Alexa, brush my teeth, please! If you have any questions related to your dental health, you can go to my website, <https://thisoldtooth.com> and ask a question in the CONTACT area. I will answer you personally by return email. Don't forget to check out my show notes for the downloadable PDF information that I've provided on Xerostomia. And if you haven't subscribed yet, please do. On my next show, I'll be discussing what those big, smelly, white chunks are in the back of

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your throat that are causing you to have the worst breath ever. So until then, thank you for listening and remember, be true to your teeth, or they will be false to you.

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