



PEP TALK



PULMONARY EDUCATION PROGRAM LITTLE COMPANY
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How COPD Patients can Reduce the Symptoms of Dry Mouth

(By PERF blog)

Dry mouth is one of the less dramatic symptoms that COPD patients sometimes experience, but it is uncomfortable and disruptive nevertheless, especially when it's severe enough to interrupt your sleep.

The technical word for dry mouth is xerostomia. It can wake you up with the feeling that your tongue, mouth, and throat are completely dried out, making it difficult to swallow. During the day, it might be less severe, but the effect can still cause discomfort and make chewing and swallowing food uncomfortable.

Luckily, in many cases, contributing factors can be identified and controlled, tamping down the dry mouth phenomenon. In other cases, such as when an essential medication causes dry mouth, a change in some daily habits or the use of mouth-moisturizing products can help to significantly reduce your dry mouth symptoms.

Contributing Factors to Dry Mouth

1. You may be taking antibiotics for an infection,

and if so, it is necessary to complete your prescribed medication. However, some antibiotics can contribute to or cause dry mouth.

2. Many antidepressants contribute to dry mouth.

3. If you have a cold or allergies and are taking antihistamines to manage your runny nose or watery eyes, the medication can also inhibit your body's ability to produce mucus, which can contribute to dry mouth.

4. Inhaled bronchodilators. Both short-acting and long-acting inhaled bronchodilators, particularly anticholinergic bronchodilators, inhibit the production of saliva by your salivary glands, which can create or worsen dry mouth.

5. If you're taking diuretics, most likely you know that they expel excess water from your body through urination. But you may not know that they also can reduce the activity of your salivary glands and cause or worsen dry mouth.

6. Sometimes oral or inhaled corticosteroids can be prescribed to relieve breathlessness and they, too, can cause or contribute to dry mouth.

7. Oxygen therapy. Medical oxygen is moisture-free, so using it can dry out your nasal passages, mouth.

8. CPAP Leakage. If you sleep with a CPAP, you could be experiencing dry mouth or worsened dry mouth symptoms due to air leaking out of your nasal mask or nasal pillow.

9. Since ingestion of alcohol can reduce your intake of water, it can contribute to dehydration, which can cause dry mouth. Even if you drink as much water as usual in addition to your alcohol consumption, the alcohol can still cause your mouth to dry out.

10. Spicy or Salty Foods. Both spicy and salty foods are known to initiate drying of the oral membranes.



Tips and Treatments for Alleviating Dry Mouth

1. Medication Changes. If you're taking medications to help control your COPD symptoms, it's important to tell your doctor if you're experiencing dry mouth. It could be that an adjustment in dosage or a switch to another brand or form of your medication will reduce or eliminate the symptoms that you are

experiencing.

2. Dry Mouth Products. You might want to try one or more of the following over-the-counter products to help alleviate your dry mouth symptoms:

- ACT Total Care Dry Mouth Lozenges
- Biotene Xylimelts
- Biotene Moisturizing Mouth Spray

3. Daily Habits. Keep a water bottle with you at all times so that you can hydrate at the first sign of dry mouth. This can be especially helpful at night when dry mouth can progress to very uncomfortable levels before it wakens you from sleep.

4. Humidifier Bottle Attachment for Medical Oxygen. If you're using a continuous flow oxygen concentrator and you have dry mouth symptoms, you might want to try a humidifier bottle attachment, which adds moisture to the oxygen that you're receiving.

5. Stand-Alone Humidifier. A humidifier for your bedroom can go a long way toward reducing your dry mouth symptoms.

6. CPAP Humidifier or Mask Adjustment. If you sleep with a CPAP machine and you experience dry mouth during the night, consider adding a heated humidifier attachment to your CPAP machine. If you currently use a nasal pillow, you might want to try switching to a face mask so that whether you sleep with your mouth open or not, you'll still receive humidified air from your machine.

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Looking Ahead



PEP May Luncheon Moved to May 24th

(By Kurt Antonius)

The Pep Pioneers May monthly luncheon, originally scheduled for May 17, has been moved to May 24! The date change was to accommodate the Pulmonary Rehab staff's need to attend a special conference. The luncheon will still be at the Sizzler Restaurant. There are no other changes to future lunch meetings.

If you have not been to a PEP monthly luncheon, we hope you will give it a try as there are terrific speakers, good food, lots of raffle prizes, and most importantly, great camaraderie!

Caregiver Workshop

(By Sarah Albright)

This workshop is a self-care program for people who provide care to an older adult with a chronic condition. During this workshop, caregivers will learn tools to reduce personal stress, better communicate with family members and healthcare providers, and how to approach tough caregiving decisions.

This workshop is a 6-week series being held on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. On Wednesdays, starting February 28th, the

workshop will be from 5:30-7pm at Beach Cities Health District. On Mondays, starting April 9th, the workshops will be from 10am-12:30pm, the location will be announced. And Tuesdays, starting May 22nd, from 5-6:30pm, the workshop will take place at Beach Cities Health District.

Please call 310-374-3426 ext. 120 to register.

In Memoriam

We send our condolences and prayers to the families and friends of the following PEP members.

They will be missed.

- Desmond Ryan
- Helen Namura
- Helen Baker

February Babies



4 Gene Yeomans	19 Phyllis Tarrant
12 Marianne Williams	21 Skip Herrin
13 Ed Pennebaker	23 Adonna Bowman
13 Maureen Anderson	26 Joyce Jessoe
14 Dan Buck	28 Ron Meier

PEP PIONEERS is a non-profit corporation comprised of graduates of the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program at Providence Little Company of Mary Hospital. We are dependent on private donations and fundraisers to finance events and purchase equipment that benefit all of its members.

Tax Deductible donations may be made to:

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Attn:

Pulmonary Rehabilitation
20929 Hawthorne Blvd.

Torrance, CA 90503

310-303-7079

www.peppioneers.com