

Jackson Allan DDS

3855 W 7800 S #210
West Jordan, Utah 84088
801-565-7455

Dry Mouth

Cavities are caused by acid erosion of the teeth. One source is from bacteria. We all have bacteria in our mouths. They eat what we eat and excrete acid as a byproduct. This acid dissolves the teeth. Another source of acid is reflux. Acid can work its way from the stomach into the mouth and cause cavities. A third major source is the food and drinks we consume. Soda for example is acidic and has the same affect. We brush and floss morning and night to remove these sources. The saliva we produce throughout the day constantly dilutes the acids introduced into the mouth and decreases the damage done to the teeth.

When saliva flow decreases, the acids are not diluted or washed away. They are allowed to contact the teeth at full strength. The rate at which cavities can form increase dramatically. A person who has not had many cavities in the past can suddenly develop many lesions that progress quickly. The area of the tooth near the gum line is affected the most. This includes the margins of the crowns.

As we get older, our risk of dry mouth increases. If you take any type of prescription drug, you are at a higher risk. Autoimmune diseases can cause it. CPAP machines can make dry mouth worse at night.

There are things you can do to protect your teeth. First and foremost is to brush and floss regularly. Brush the teeth before bedtime. I recommend you brush, spit and not rinse the excess out if you can stand it. This leaves a little more fluoride in your mouth to help rebuild the teeth. I am a huge fan of a Waterpik. It is an alternative to flossing. If you have any amount of recession, this leads to bigger spaces between the teeth and a Waterpik does a great job of flushing them out. Also, if you use a mouthwash, use a non-alcohol based mouthwash. They constrict saliva glands and decrease saliva flow. Biotene has a line of products specifically designed for dry mouth, including toothpaste, mouthwash, saliva substitute etc. Using ACT fluoride rinse as a mouthwash is a good idea. Xylimelts, is a lozenges you can use that helps increase saliva flow. It is made with the sugar Xylitol which kills the bacteria in your mouth. Xylitol gum is another option. Prevalent 5000 is a prescription strength toothpaste. The higher fluoride content may remineralize teeth faster leading to stronger teeth. Gum Detoxify toothpaste from Crest contains Stannous Fluoride. This type of fluoride rebuilds teeth but also kills bacteria. Most toothpastes contain Sodium Fluoride. This type rebuilds teeth but does not affect bacteria. Finally, make wise food and drink choices. Soda is acidic and packed with sugar. It acts like a liquid chainsaw on your teeth.

Products to help:

1. Waterpik
2. Biotene
3. Non-alcohol mouthwash (Biotene brand or ACT are good choices)
4. Xylimelts (I've seen them at CVS but most pharmacies probably carry them)
5. Xylitol Gum (Spry is one brand name)
6. Prevalent 5000 toothpaste
7. Gum Detoxify toothpaste from Crest