



# Patient Education Sheet

## Simple Solutions for Treating Dry Mouth

**Clinicians:** Please make as many copies of this Patient Education Sheet as you want and distribute to your patients. If you have an idea for a topic or want to author a Patient Education Sheet, please contact us at [sq@sjogrens.org](mailto:sq@sjogrens.org).

The SSF thanks **Frederick Vivino, MD, FACR**, University of Pennsylvania, Penn Rheumatology Associates & Sjögren's Syndrome Center, Philadelphia, for authoring "Simple Solutions for Treating Dry Mouth."

- ▶ Ask your family doctor to discontinue or provide substitutes for all medications that cause dry mouth.
- ▶ Eat smaller, more frequent meals to stimulate saliva flow.
- ▶ Increase your intake of liquids (e.g. water, diet soda) during the day. Small sips work best.
- ▶ Minimize time in air-conditioned environments such as offices, supermarkets, airplanes, etc.
- ▶ Use a humidifier at bedtime (target humidity 40-50%) during the fall and winter months when the air is dry to increase nighttime moisture and decrease discomfort.
- ▶ Stop cigarette, cigar and pipe smoking to lessen dryness and your risk for other health problems.
- ▶ Chew sugar-free gum or suck on hard diabetic or sugar-free candies, fruit pits or lemon rinds to activate reflexes that will increase saliva. Look for products containing xylitol, a sweetener that may help prevent dental decay.
- ▶ Try artificial salivas. Use 2-3 squirts in the mouth every hour while awake and at nighttime as needed. Do not spit out any preparation that is safe to swallow to help it last longer.
- ▶ Avoid mouthwashes, fluoride rinses or products containing alcohol or witch hazel that can aggravate oral dryness or burning.
- ▶ Apply vitamin E oil (use liquid or punch hole in capsules) or moisturizing gels to dry or sore parts of the mouth or tongue. Use 2-3x/day after meals, at bedtime, when talking for long periods, exercising, or any other time your mouth needs long-lasting relief.
- ▶ Contact the Sjögren's Syndrome Foundation to obtain a copy of its Product Directory, available free of charge to all members.

For more information on Sjögren's syndrome, visit the SSF Web site at [www.sjogrens.org](http://www.sjogrens.org), call 1-800-475-6473, e-mail [ssf@sjogrens.org](mailto:ssf@sjogrens.org) or write to the Sjögren's Syndrome Foundation, 6707 Democracy Blvd, Suite 325, Bethesda, MD 20817.