

mouth dryness or thick saliva


Radiation therapy to the head and neck areas, some types of chemo, and certain other medicines can cause dry mouth or thick saliva. The glands that make saliva can become irritated and make less saliva, or your saliva can become very thick and sticky. Dryness can be mild or severe.

A dry mouth can increase your risk of cavities and mouth infection. If you smoke, chew tobacco, or drink alcohol, the dryness can be worse.

If you have either of these side effects, drink plenty of fluids throughout the day and eat moist foods as much as possible. Also brush your teeth and rinse your mouth often with a baking soda, salt, and water solution to help keep it clean and prevent infection (recipe follows).

WHAT TO DO

- Drink 8 to 10 cups of liquid a day, and take a water bottle wherever you go. (Drinking lots of fluids helps thin mucus.)
- Take small bites, and chew your food well.
- Eat soft, moist foods that are cool or at room temperature. Try blenderized fruits and vegetables, soft-cooked chicken and fish, well-thinned cereals, popsicles, smoothies, and slushies.
- Avoid foods that stick to the roof of the mouth like peanut butter or soft bread.
- Moisten foods with broth, soup, sauces, gravy, yogurt, or creams.
- Suck on sugarless candy or chew sugarless gum to stimulate saliva. Citrus, cinnamon, and mint flavors often work well.
- Keep your mouth clean. Rinse your mouth before and after meals with plain water or a mild mouth rinse (made with 1 quart water, 1 teaspoon salt, and 1 teaspoon baking soda – shake well before using). Use a soft-bristle toothbrush. It's a good idea to gently brush your tongue, too. Ask your doctor if it's OK to floss.
- Avoid commercial mouthwashes, alcoholic and acidic drinks, and tobacco.
- Limit caffeine intake, from coffee, tea, energy drinks, and caffeinated soft drinks.
- Use a cool mist humidifier to moisten room air, especially at night. (Be sure to keep the humidifier clean to avoid spreading bacteria or mold in the air.)
- Fresh pineapple or papaya may help to thin saliva, but only try this if your mouth is not sore.
- Saliva substitutes are helpful if your salivary glands have been removed by surgery or damaged by radiation therapy. These products add moisture to your mouth.
- Nutritional supplements, like liquid meal replacements, may be helpful. If you can't get enough calories and nutrition through solid foods, you may need to use liquid supplements for some time. Talk to your cancer care team about this.



If you have any questions please contact or
make an appointment with our dietitian at

505-727-3040.

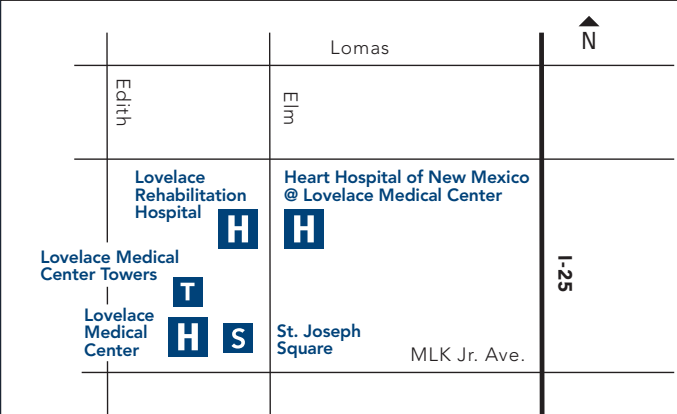
WHAT TO EAT OR NOT EAT WHEN YOU HAVE A DRY MOUTH*

| | EAT | FOODS THAT MAY CAUSE PROBLEMS |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| HIGH PROTEIN | Meats, poultry, and fish in sauces and gravies Casseroles, soups, and stews | Dry meats, poultry, and fish without sauces |
| BREADS, CEREALS, RICE, AND PASTA | Bread, rolls Cooked and cold cereals, cereal with milk Rice soaked in gravy, sauce, broth, or milk | Dry breads, rolls Pasta, rice Pretzels, chips Dry cereal |
| FRUITS AND VEGETABLES | Canned and fresh fruits that have a lot of moisture, like oranges and peaches Vegetables in sauce | Bananas, dried fruit Vegetables, unless in a sauce or with a high moisture content |
| DRINKS, DESSERTS, AND OTHER FOODS | Club soda, hot tea with lemon (decaf), fruit-ades, diluted juices, sports drinks Commercial liquid nutrition supplements Homemade milk shakes; ice cream, sherbet, pudding Butter, margarine Salad dressing Sour cream, half-and-half | Cookies, cake, pie, unless soaked in milk |

About Us

With over 37 years of experience, Hematology Oncology Associates is committed to providing the best cancer care possible for their patients. Hematology Oncology Associates is a Quality Oncology Practice Initiatives (QOPI) certified site that demonstrates rigorous standards for quality cancer care and safety measures established by the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) and the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS).

We gladly accept most major insurance plans, including Blue Cross and Blue Shield, Molina Healthcare, TRICARE, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan, United Retiree Health Care Authority, Medicaid, Medicare, and many others.



CONTACT US

715 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Suite 102 | Albuquerque, NM 87102
505.727.3040 Phone | 505.727.3099 Fax
We are located in the St. Joseph Square building on Lovelace Medical Center's campus.