

# FACT SHEET: CARE OF A DRY MOUTH

There are many things that you can do to help improve your dry mouth symptoms and reduce your risk of dry mouth-related health problems.

## Things to do

- DRINK LOTS OF TAP WATER. Aim to drink at least 1.5 litres of tap water a day.
- Drink water by the glass or half glass. Try to avoid constant sipping as this washes away any protective effect of the remaining saliva in your mouth.
- Eat breakfast. Choose something chewy e.g. crunchy cereal or toast. Chewing helps to stimulate the flow of saliva.
- Chew MINT flavoured sugar-free gum or suck MINT flavoured sugar-free lollies. Fruit-flavoured gum or lollies can be acidic, damaging the lining of your mouth or dissolving the surface of your teeth.
- Keep your mouth clean. Brush at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste. If possible, brush after every meal.

## Things to avoid

- Avoid snacking on sugary foods or drinks between meals. This will help reduce your risk of tooth decay.
- Avoid acidic foods and drinks, such as fizzy drinks, fruit juice, fruit teas and pickles. If you must have them, reduce their effects by keeping them to meal times. The safest drinks are tap water and milk.
- Avoid salty or spicy foods. These may irritate the lining of your mouth.
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco, tea and coffee as these can reduce the flow of saliva.
- If you do drink tea and coffee, add cow's milk; this will help reduce the drying effects.

## See your dentist

Your dentist will be able to check for any signs of oral health problems related to your dry mouth, so see your dentist regularly.

Your dentist may suggest some products that may help reduce your risk of tooth decay and acid erosion of your teeth. They may also suggest suitable rinses and mouth sprays to help with lubrication and protection.

