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Xerostomia (Dry Mouth) and Wearing Dentures

Presence of adequate amounts of *saliva* between denture & gum tissues is essential for denture comfort and fit. Without enough saliva, dentures will have little to no suction and won't stay in place. Without the lubricating effects of saliva, tissues contacting a denture will become chafed and irritated & can also cause a burning sensation and sores.

Some Common Causes of Dry Mouth

- Medications: There are over 400 commonly prescribed medications that have xerostomia as a possible side effect, and this is a frequent cause of dryness. (*e.g.: antidepressants & blood pressure medications*)
- Aging: The amount of saliva produced by salivary glands lessens as a person ages.
- Illnesses: Xerostomia is sometimes associated with certain illnesses or conditions such as chronic diarrhea, liver dysfunction, or Sjogren's syndrome.
- Radiation therapy: Radiotherapy that is used to treat some head and neck cancers may reduce salivary gland function as a side effect.
- Habits: Chronic mouth breathing and inadequate fluid consumption (especially here in Arizona) often will cause dry mouth.

Treatment of Dry Mouth

Although there is no single way to treat Dry Mouth, there are mouth products, such as **Biotene** and **Oasis**, which are specifically manufactured to relieve the symptoms of Dry Mouth. These include special mouthwashes, oral gels and sprays. FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS PROVIDED ON THESE PRODUCTS. If you have symptoms of Dry Mouth, mention this to your dentist and he/she will be able to suggest the best course of action for you. Here are some tips to help you tolerate your dentures better:

- Take frequent sips of water during the day (avoid: caffeinated, sugary drinks.)
- Make sure your mouth is moist before eating.
- Remove your dentures & rinse your mouth after every meal.
- Drink more frequently while eating.
- Eat more high water content fruits and vegetables (e.g. cucumbers, melons.)
- Suck on sugarless hard candy.
- Do not sleep with your dentures. Soak them in water overnight.
- Keep a glass of water by your bed at night.