The Dentist Is IN

What to do about dry mouth

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HIV meds, other drugs and HIV itself can cause dry mouth (xerostomia, or not enough saliva to lubricate teeth and gums and help you eat and swallow). If your mouth is dry, brush up on this advice from David Reznik, DDS, of the HIV Dental Alliance:

“People with dry mouth are more susceptible to cavities and gum disease,” Reznik says. He prescribes “good oral hygiene—brush and floss at least twice a day—and regular preventive dental visits.” What’s regular? Reznik says people with HIV and dry mouth may need care at three- or four-month intervals.

Some relief: “Dry-mouth remedies include sucking on sugar-free hard candies, chewing sugar-free gum and taking frequent sips of water or non-carbonated, non-caffeinated, sugar-free liquids. And avoid sticky, sugary foods.”

OTC aids: Reznik recommends: Biotene’s Oral Balance gel or mouthwash to moisten and soothe plus a fluoride toothpaste to counter the extra risk of cavities and gum disease. If dry mouth has already caused tooth decay, try a prescription-strength fluoride toothpaste such as Colgate’s PreviDent 5000 booster.

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