

Xerostomia

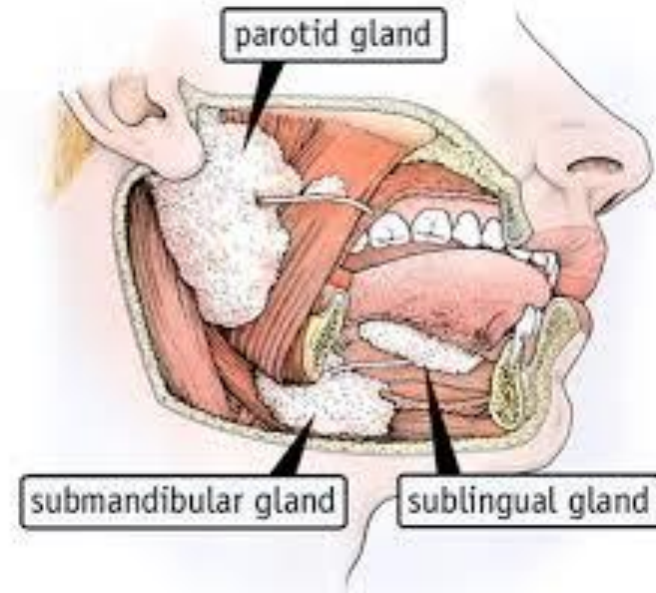


Oral Answers

Mindy Huang
DEN1114

WHAT IS XEROSTOMIA?

Xerostomia, or dry mouth, is the decreased production of saliva by the salivary glands. Saliva is important to the overall health of the mouth since it has proteins and minerals that fight bacteria and help remineralize tooth enamel. It also helps to lubricate your mouth, which helps you eat and speak comfortably.

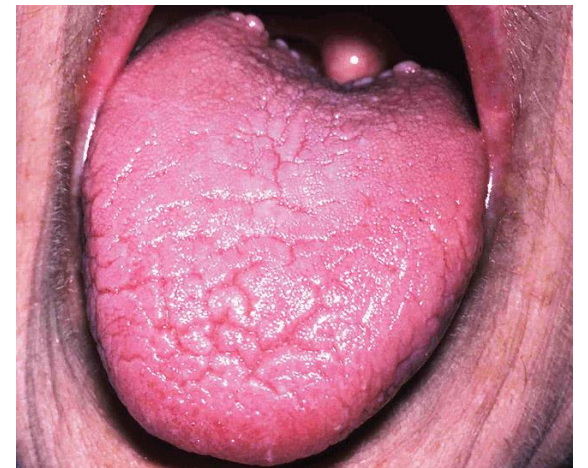


WHAT CAUSES XEROSTOMIA?

- Side effect of certain medications, ie.: anti-depressants, anti-histamines, anti-hypertensives
- Medical treatments, ie: chemotherapy, radiation therapy
- Smoking and/or chewing tobacco
- Diseases such as diabetes, Sjögren's syndrome, Parkinson's disease, and rheumatoid arthritis
- Nerve damage to the head and neck area

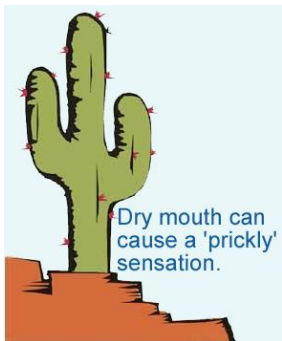


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DEVELOPMENTAL DISTURBANCES

- Bad breath (halitosis)
- Increased cervical caries
- Speech difficulties
- Trouble tasting, chewing, and swallowing
- Increased trauma to oral mucosa (sores in mouth, raw tongue, cracked lips)
- Increased risk of gingivitis and oral infections



WHAT CAN WE DO?

As dental hygienists, our job is to help prevent disease and educate our patients. To help the symptoms of dry mouth, we should recommend that patients:

- Sip on water though out the day
- Suck on sugar-free candies or chew sugar-free gum
- Use alcohol-free mouth rinses, especially those indicated for dry mouth
- Stop smoking
- Use an over-the-counter saliva substitute
- See their dentist regularly



**STOP
SMOKING**



Xerostomia is not a disease; it is a side effect of various origins. With proper treatment, it can be managed successfully!

