Let’s talk about Mouth Dryness...

- Mouth dryness is when you have less saliva than normal and/or thicker saliva than you normally do.
- This can happen because of chemotherapy, radiation or medications.

What you can do

- Drink clear fluids, 6-8 glasses per day.
- Try using a bland mouth rinse 4 times per day. Recipe: 1 cup warm water, ½ tsp table salt (or baking soda). Swish in your mouth for at least 30 seconds and spit out.
- If you are having a hard time swallowing, try to eat a soft diet (e.g. oatmeal, bananas, applesauce, pasta, eggs, etc.).
- Keep your mouth cool and moist with fresh, cold foods (e.g. popsicles, frozen grapes, cold water, ice cubes).
- Brush your teeth at least twice a day using a soft toothbrush and fluoride toothpaste. Floss daily if possible.
- Use a cool air humidifier or bedside vaporizer.
- Chew on sugar-free gum or suck on hard candy to create saliva.
- Use lip moisturizers in the form of a balm, cream or salve (e.g. Chapstick) to protect your lips.
- Ask your healthcare team about saliva substitutes.

What to Avoid:

- Avoid foods and drinks that are very acidic, caffeinated, sugary, salty, spicy or very hot in temperature.
- Avoid tobacco and alcohol, including alcohol-based mouthwashes.

Other resources

Mouth Care During Treatment

More resources at
mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient

In your hospital

Symptom Hotlines

MUHC: (514) 934-1934 ext. 34160
JGH: (514) 340-8222 ext. 25529
St. Mary’s: (514) 734-2679, ext. 5

Don’t hesitate to call!
Hours of operation: 8AM to 4PM

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This information should not be considered as medical advice. It is not to be used in place of a visit with a doctor, nurse or other healthcare professional. If you have questions about your individual medical situation, please consult with your healthcare professional.