

# Mouth Dryness



Réseau de  
cancérologie  
Rossy

Rossy  
Cancer  
Network

## Symptom Management Tip Sheet



### 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.

*\* If you are undergoing IMMUNOTHERAPY and have these symptoms please contact your healthcare team as soon as possible. Delays can increase side effects and toxicity.*



### 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.

Based on: Remote Symptom Practice Guides for Adults on Cancer Treatments © 2020 D Stacey for the Pan-Canadian Oncology Symptom Triage and Remote Support (COSTaRS) Team. University of Ottawa School of Nursing and the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute, Ottawa, Canada.

*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.*

### Other resources

#### Mouth Care During Treatment

<https://bit.ly/cco-mouthcare>

#### More resources at

[mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient](http://mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient)

### Who can help



#### Nurse Navigator (IPO)

If you have one, please speak with your IPO

#### Your Community Pharmacist

#### Dietitian

Ask your doctor or nurse for a referral

### If you are getting treatment at:

#### ▪ Oncology Clinic, call:

Symptom Management Hotline

514-340-8222 ext. 25529

Mon – Fri. 8h00-16h00

Nights/Weekends: 514-340-8232

#### ▪ Radiation Oncology Clinic, call:

514-340-8222 ext. 24124