

Healthy Mouth, Healthy Mind

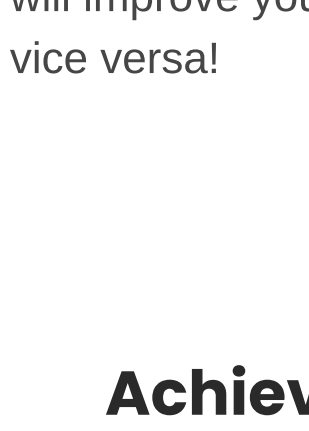


The mental health – oral health cycle

Q: What is oral health?

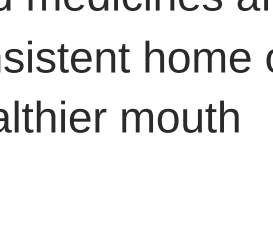
A: **Oral health** includes your teeth, gums, throat, and the bones around the mouth. It also allows you to smile, speak, chew and show emotions.

You can take care of your oral health by brushing, flossing, visiting the dentist and using the recommendations below.

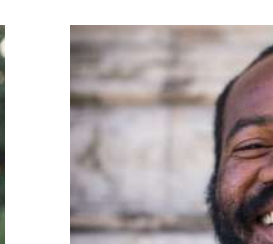


The health of the body and the health of the mind are closely connected.

Poor mental health can lead to the poor care of teeth and gums, which can cause social anxiety and self-esteem issues.



Taking good care of your oral health will improve your mental health, and vice versa!



Achieving Better Overall Health

Understanding how certain conditions and medicines affect your oral health, as well as practicing consistent home oral care will set you on the path to a healthier mouth and a healthier mind.



Issues That Can Affect Oral Health

Dental anxiety:

People who fear going to the dentist often fail to see their dentist.



Depression and poor self-care:

Difficulty brushing, flossing and visiting the dentist can result in gum disease and tooth decay.

Alcohol, tobacco, and drug abuse:

Over time drinking too much alcohol can cause gum disease and possibly oral cancer.

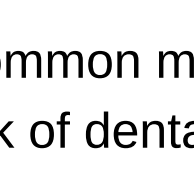
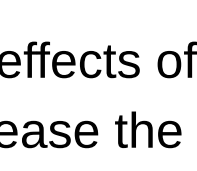


Eating disorders:

People suffering from conditions like bulimia often have dental decay. The acid in vomit can dissolve the surface of teeth.

Eating or drinking too many sugary foods:

This can cause cavities.



Loss of appetite:

This can lead to poor nutrition, which can lead to tooth decay.

Effects of Medicines on Oral Health

Side effects of common medicines can increase the risk of dental diseases.



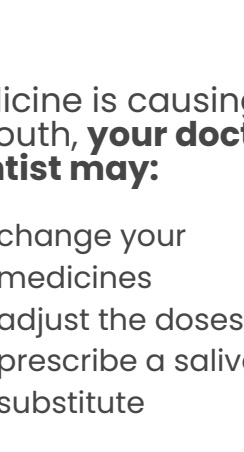
Medicines for depression can cause a change in the sense of taste.

Medicines for psychosis can cause stiff movements of the face, or more saliva.



Several kinds of mental health medicines, such as those for depression, can cause dry mouth.

People taking multiple medicines at the same time have less saliva. This is sometimes seen in older people.



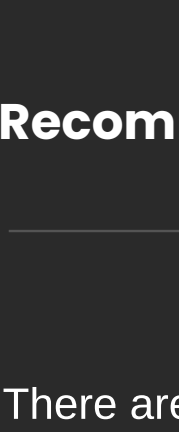
Dry Mouth



Dry mouth is a common side effect of certain mental health medicines.



It means **not having enough saliva** to keep the mouth wet.



Dry mouth increases the risk for **tooth decay** or **infections** in the mouth.



If medicine is causing dry mouth, **your doctor or dentist may:**

- change your medicines
- adjust the doses
- prescribe a saliva substitute

Self-Care Recommendations for Dry Mouth

There are self-care steps you can take to help ease dry mouth.



Drink plenty of water



Use sugar-free gum or mints



Avoid drinks with caffeine that can dry the mouth:

- Coffee
- Tea
- Some sodas



Avoid spicy or salty foods, which may cause pain in a dry mouth.



Avoid tobacco, alcohol and cigarettes.



Use a humidifier at night.



Plus the recommendations in the Home Oral Care section below

Home Oral Care Recommendations



Brush teeth gently twice a day with fluoride toothpaste



Clean between teeth daily with dental floss.



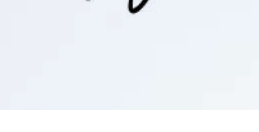
Eat a healthy diet that limits sugary drinks and snacks.



Visit your dentist twice a year.



Consider using mouth rinse with fluoride. If you have dry mouth, avoid mouth rinse with alcohol.



Quit smoking and vaping. Your dentist or doctor can give you information about quitting.

Talk with your doctor or therapist if you have concerns about your mental health.



American Dental Association: Home Oral Care

www.ADA.org

American Dental Association: Xerostomia (Dry Mouth)

www.ADA.org

National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research: Dry Mouth

www.nidcr.nih.gov

Oral Health Foundation: Mental Illness and Oral Health

www.dentalhealth.org

