

# GMHC'S Nutrition & Wellness Program

---

## DRY MOUTH

### Facts about Dry Mouth

- Result of decreased saliva production - eating and/or swallowing may be difficult.
- Medications and/or medical treatments can cause dry mouth.
- The mouth may have a dull taste.
- Dental problems, like cavities, are common.

### Tips to Manage Dry Mouth

- **Rinse** mouth often with salted, warm water or mouthwash (alcohol-free).
- **Drink** plenty of liquids between and during meals, such as water and diluted fruit juices, to keep the mouth moist.
- Popsicles, fruit ices, applesauce, pudding, and ice chips can **moisten** your **mouth**.
- When cooking, **moisten foods** with gravies and sauces. Avoid dry, rough, and crumbly foods.
- **Avoid** sweet, sticky foods and candies. Excess sugar can dry the mouth and promote dental caries (cavities).
- Try lemon, vanilla, or cinnamon to enhance the **flavor** of foods.
- Use water-based lubricants, cocoa butter, or lip balm to keep your lips **lubricated**.
- **Moisten** your **air** at home with a humidifier or pan of water near the heat source.

### Tips to Stimulate Saliva

- **Chew** sugarless gum

- **Suck** on crushed ice or sugarless candies, lozenges, and sour drops.
- Add **lemon** to water and other beverages.
- **Avoid** thick nectars, juices, and creamy soups. **Consume** well-thinned broth-based soups and diluted nectars and juices.
- If saliva production is severely limited, consult with your physician about obtaining a prescription for **artificial saliva**. An over-the-counter brand called "Salivart" is also available.

## MOUTH SORES

### Facts about Mouth Sores

- Common, 90% occurrence, in individuals with compromised immune systems.
- Soreness and pain can result in decreased appetite, food intake, and impaired dental hygiene.
- Gingivitis (inflammation of the gums), mouth ulcers, or Candida Albicans (a type of yeast/fungus which leads to thrush) are common causes of mouth soreness or pain.

### Herbal Rinses:

\***Slippery elm or marshmallow root:** mix ½ tsp. powder into 1 cup warm water. Stir well to dissolve thoroughly, rinse mouth or gargle if necessary.

## Tips to Manage Mouth Soreness/Pain

Revised 12/09

I:\docs\nutrit\research\drymouth.doc

- **Choose** soft or pureed foods
  - Soups
  - Applesauce
  - Oatmeal, Cream of Rice
  - Pudding, Custard, Flan
  - Yogurt with live and active cultures
  - Mashed potatoes
  - Hard-cooked eggs
- **Warm** or **moderate** temperature foods are better tolerated than hot foods.
- **Cold** foods like ice cream, sherbet, fruit ice, and frozen yogurt will numb the taste buds.
- **Soak** toast, chips and crackers in liquids to soften them.
- **Grind** meats in a food processor or blender with non-spicy or creamy soup to ease chewing.
- **Avoid** spicy, salty, sticky, or rough foods, carbonated beverages, and citrus fruits/juices which may irritate sores and cause pain.
- **Avoid** smoking and alcoholic drinks.

## Tips for Treating Mouth Sores

- **Rinse** your mouth frequently to keep it fresh.
- **Choose** alcohol-free mouthwashes