



HEALTH FACTS & FIGURES

Is Dryness A Problem For You?

(NAPSA)—For millions of Americans, the common symptoms of dry eye and dry mouth may mean more than just a lack of moisture in the air. These feelings of discomfort could be indicative of an autoimmune disease called Sjögren's syndrome.

Sjögren's syndrome is a condition where the body attacks its own exocrine, or moisture-producing, glands. It primarily affects women and it may be associated with other diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, lupus and scleroderma. The syndrome can prevent certain areas of the body from receiving sufficient lubrication. The areas include the eyes, mouth, skin, vagina, respiratory tract and gastrointestinal tract. Left untreated, Sjögren's syndrome may lead to more serious

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medical problems, including dental decay, infections of the mouth and red, filmy eyes.

Talk to your doctor if you think you may be suffering from dryness due to Sjögren's syndrome. Only your doctor can determine whether your symptoms are related to Sjögren's syndrome.

Sjögren's syndrome can also be treated by providing moisture



For people with Sjögren's syndrome, help—including medication—may be available.

locally to the areas affected by dryness. For example, dry mouth symptoms of Sjögren's syndrome may be treated by the use of over-the-counter saliva substitutes. While saliva substitutes provide some immediate moisture, their benefit is short-acting because they are swallowed. Moreover, saliva substitutes do not replace the natural function of saliva.

Fortunately, there are medications called secretory agents or cholinergic agonists that can provide moisture to the mouth by stimulating the flow of saliva.

Talk to your healthcare provider about your dryness symptoms and ask about available therapies that may bring you comfort.

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