

# Health Awareness

## Don't Let Dry Mouth Become A Health Hazard

(NAPSA)—If you or anyone you care about is among the majority of Americans who have stopped or wanted to stop taking a prescribed medication due to side effects, there could be good news. Some common side effects can easily be treated with over-the-counter products.

According to a new survey by Wakefield Research, nearly one in three adults has completely stopped taking a medication because of side effects like dry mouth. Some 50 percent of Americans are on a prescription drug of some sort and more than 400 common medications can cause dry mouth, including over-the-counter cold remedies and antihistamines, antidepressants and commonly used medications for high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes and high cholesterol. When you take more medication, you increase the risk of dry mouth. You have a 35 percent increased risk for dry mouth when you are on three or more medications.

Dry mouth sufferers often don't notice they have a problem until their saliva flow has already dropped by 50 percent. Here's how to tell if you're among the millions affected:

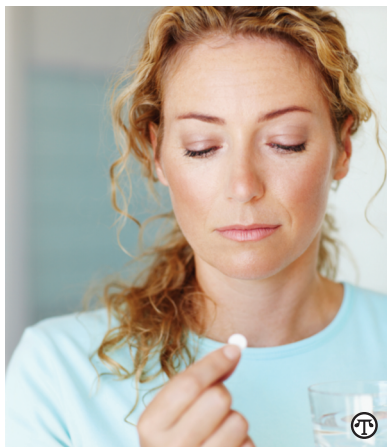
### Dry Mouth Checklist

- Do you take one or more medications daily?
- Does your mouth usually feel dry?
- Do you regularly do things to keep your mouth moist?
- Do you get out of bed at night to drink fluids?
- Does your mouth usually become dry when you speak?

If you answered "yes" to one or more of these questions, you may have a problem with dry mouth.

### More About Dry Mouth

Also called xerostomia, dry mouth affects approximately one in four adults, especially women and older people. If left untreated, it can cause even more oral health problems such as cavities. Dry



**Dry mouth affects millions of Americans, especially those using many commonly prescribed drugs—but it can be treated.**

mouth increases the likelihood of tooth decay by approximately three times because of the lack of saliva that naturally protects teeth and gums.

### Ask Your Pharmacist

Fortunately, pharmacists can help by encouraging and increasing dialogue with their patients. "We want you to ask us about medication side effects and what to do if you experience them," said Pamala S. Marquess, Pharm.D, a compensated spokesperson for Biotène. "Our job is to also let you know what side effects you may experience with your medication and counsel you to use the correct product for your level of severity. For example, dry mouth is a very common side effect, so it's important to treat its symptoms to avoid creating other issues. As a pharmacist, I can tell you that Biotène is the No. 1-recommended dry mouth symptom treatment. It is specially formulated with moisturizers and lubricants and provides soothing relief."

### Learn More

You can take a dry mouth quiz and find further facts about dealing with dry mouth at [www.biotene.com](http://www.biotene.com) and (800) 922-5856.