# Coping With Dry Mouth Caused by Overactive Bladder Medication

by OLIVIA ROBBIN

## What Causes Overactive Bladder and Dry Mouth?

Dry mouth is what happens when you have a decreased amount of saliva in your mouth, otherwise known as xerostomia. Dry mouth usually occurs when taking certain medications.

For some of us, we need to take these medications that can cause dry mouth because we have another ongoing medical concern.

Some of these medications include:

- Atropine and scopolamine – treat colitis, spastic bladder, diverticulitis, motion sickness, nausea and irritable bowel syndrome.
- Antidepressants – treats depression, dysthymia, anxiety disorders, eating disorders amongst others.
- Antihypertensives – treats high blood pressure.

Dry mouth can also occur with certain health conditions. If you smoke, are a mouth breather, have sleep apnea, even just being dehydrated can cause dry mouth.

Dry mouth can cause a lot of serious health problems if not taken care of. One of the main concerns is permanent tooth, gum, and throat disorders and disease.

### Overactive Bladder and Dry Mouth: A Difficult Side Effect to Deal with

When you have dry mouth, one of the common side effects is sticky and thick saliva. Your immediate instinct is to saturate or relieve that thirst in your mouth.

However, when you have OAB, you may need to think twice about downing a liter of water any time of the day. Even just drinking too much water is not good for you, with or without OAB. We need to find other ways to combat dry mouth when we have OAB, rather than just drinking water.

With OAB, one of our problems is the frequency of urination. Frequency can be caused by too much fluid intake or by very yellow, or acidic, urine.

Things we usually try to avoid with OAB are excessive water, caffeine, and alcohol consumption, as it will cause irritation with frequency. Dry mouth may cause you to want to consume anything to relieve your dry mouth symptoms.

### How to Cope With OAB and Dry Mouth

It is advised to not consume caffeine or alcohol when you have dry mouth, as it may decrease saliva production

and still leave you dehydrated. It’s recommended to drink water as usual with both dry mouth and OAB, but there are a few ways to relieve dry mouth and keep your OAB at bay without consuming extra water.

Chewing or sucking on ice chips throughout the day can help relieve some unpleasant symptoms of dry mouth. Chewing on sugar-free gum can help promote saliva flow.

A few other ways of combating dry mouth and OAB are adding humidity to the air at night with a humidifier, as well as trying to breathe through your nose. If you suffer from snoring or sleep apnea, you are more than likely breathing through your mouth, which will leave you with a dry mouth. Seeking treatment for these problems may help with dry mouth.

**The Takeaway**

The overall goal of improving dry mouth is to increase saliva and moisture in your mouth. With OAB, our goal is to try and reduce any external factors that we can control to minimize OAB symptoms. Unfortunately, these two may go hand in hand, and with either one not treated, can cause serious health issues.

Now our goal is to control how we handle both. We may not achieve the desired results of having any symptoms of either issue, but now we know what causes dry mouth, and what are the best ways to combat dry mouth and OAB together.