

# Carel's Pharmacy & Compounding Center

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## Xerostomia

Xerostomia is defined as dry mouth resulting from reduced or absent saliva flow. Xerostomia is a symptom of various medical conditions, a side effect of a radiation to the head and neck, or a side effect of a wide variety of medications. It may or may not be associated with decreased salivary gland function. Xerostomia is a common complaint found often among older adults, affecting approximately 20 percent of the elderly. However, Xerostomia does not appear to be related to age itself as much as to the potential for elderly to be taking medications that cause xerostomia as a side effect.

Xerostomia is often a contributing factor for both minor and serious health problems. It can affect nutrition and dental, as well as psychological, health. Some common problems associated with xerostomia include a constant sore throat, burning sensation, difficulty speaking and swallowing, hoarseness and/or dry nasal passages.

Xerostomia is an original hidden cause of gum disease and tooth loss in three out of every 10 adults. If left untreated, xerostomia decreases the oral pH and significantly increases the development of plaque and dental caries.

Oral candidiasis is one of the most common oral infections seen in association with xerostomia.

Individuals with xerostomia often complain of problems with eating, speaking, swallowing and wearing dentures. Dry, crumbly foods, such as cereals and crackers, may be particularly difficult to chew and swallow. Denture wearers may have problems with denture retention, denture sores and the tongue sticking to the palate. Patients with xerostomia often complain of taste disorders, a painful tongue and an increased need to drink water, especially at night. Xerostomia can lead to markedly increased dental caries, parotid gland enlargement, inflammation and fissuring of the lips, inflammation or ulcers of the tongue and buccal mucosa, oral candidiasis, salivary gland infection, halitosis and cracking and fissuring of the oral mucosa.

Xerostomia may be treated with several different types of therapy including saliva substitutes, saliva stimulants, dentifrices and prescription products.

This month's featured compound are **Cotton Mouth Lollipops and Electrolyte Troches**.

**Cotton Mouth Lollipops** are a compounded treatment for Xerostomia. They contain Pilocarpine 5mg in a sugar-free sorbitol lollipop base. Pilocarpine is a cholinergic antagonist that increases bodily secretions. The medication is used by dissolving the lollipop in mouth for 20 to 30 seconds repeating every 2 hours as needed. The lollipop is then rinsed and returned to the childproof container for future use.

**Electrolyte Troches** are a compounded treatment for Xerostomia. They contain an electrolyte mixture in a sugar-free troche base. The medication is used by dissolving one troche in mouth repeating every 2 hours as needed.

If you have any questions regarding these therapies or any other medication related problems, please call our specially trained compounding pharmacists and staff at (580) 355-4540.