



# How medications can affect your mouth

Medicines are made to help you feel better. But some can cause problems in your mouth. One common side effect is dry mouth. Over 400 types of medicine can cause this, including allergy pills, antidepressants, sleep aids, and blood pressure drugs.<sup>1</sup>

Saliva helps clean your mouth. Without enough saliva, you may get gum disease or cavities. Some medicines can also change how food tastes or leave a bitter or metallic taste. These include nicotine patches, inhalers, and heart medicine.



Even aspirin can affect your mouth. It helps prevent heart attacks, but it can also make your gums bleed more easily. Other side effects from medicine may include mouth sores, swollen gums, or bone loss.

If medicine causes a problem in your mouth, talk to your doctor. Ask if there's another option. Also, tell your dentist about all the medicines you take so they can help manage any side effects.

## Did you know?

Almost 70% of Americans take at least one prescription drug. More than half take two or more.<sup>2</sup>



# Quick bites

**Some liquid medicines have sugar, which can lead to cavities. Here's how to lower the risk:**

- Choose sugar-free medicine when you can
- Take medicine with food, if allowed
- Ask if it comes in pill form
- Rinse your mouth with water after taking it
- Don't take medicine right before bed
- Brush with fluoride toothpaste twice a day for two minutes
- Floss every day
- Visit your dentist regularly



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<sup>1</sup> "Do You Have Dry Mouth?" Journal of the American Dental Association 133 no. 10 (2002): 1455. <sup>2</sup> Mayo Clinic, "Nearly 7 in 10 Americans Take Prescription Drugs, Mayo Clinic, Olmsted Medical Center Find," web.