

# Dr. Little's Dental News

Presented by Jeffery Little, D.D.S.



## ZEROING IN ON XEROSTOMIA

It is important to properly diagnose the cause of "xerostomia" (dry mouth) in order to treat it properly. While many older adults incorrectly assume that xerostomia is a natural part of aging, it is more likely to be a side effect of the 400 or so medications that can affect the salivary glands, including antihistamines, decongestants, antidepressants, diuretics and other hypertension medications, drugs used to treat Parkinson's disease, chemotherapy drugs, and medication used to treat dementia. Additionally, dry mouth may be caused by radiation to the head and neck; nerve damage affecting the salivary glands; and conditions such as the autoimmune disorder Sjögren's syndrome, diabetes, and HIV/AIDS. For chronic xerostomia,

a prescription-strength fluoride gel may be needed to protect teeth.

If you think your dry mouth is caused by certain medications you're taking, talk to your doctor. He or she may adjust the dose you're taking or switch you to a different medication that doesn't cause dry mouth. A trip to the dentist may be one of your most important appointments!

Our practice stresses preventive dentistry by teaching patients good oral hygiene habits. To schedule an appointment, please call our office. New patients are always welcome.

P.S. If left untreated, xerostomia can lead to speech and eating difficulties, halitosis (bad breath), an increase in the number of dental cavities (saliva helps prevent tooth decay), and infections in the mouth (such as thrush).

*Dr. Little provides quality family and cosmetic dentistry.*

*His office is located at 344 Placerville Dr., Suite 19, Placerville.*

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