

Patient Education Sheet

Oral Candidiasis (Thrush) in Sjögren's

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Oral candidiasis, or thrush, is a common problem in dry mouth patients. Thrush can cause oral burning and pain. The appearance of thrush in a dry mouth patient often is atypical and appears as red and irritated instead of the typical white cottage-cheesy. The tongue may show grooves, and the corners of the lips appear red and crusty (called angular cheilitis).

- Schedule regular professional care and follow up.
- Treat the underlying condition of dry mouth.
- Practice excellent oral hygiene.
- Change your toothbrush frequently when oral candidiasis is active.
- Increase oral moisture through use of sugar-free gum, lozenges, and artificial salivas. Sip water frequently and rinse after eating or drinking if you can't brush.
- Talk to your dentist or rheumatologist about taking Evxac® (cevimilene) or Salagen® (pilocarpine) to increase salivary flow.
- If any of your medications list dryness as a side effect, talk with your doctor about alternatives. Limit sugar and foods that contain yeast, such as wine, beer, and bread.
- Increase intake of acidophilus through unsweetened yogurts with live lactobacillus acidophilus or capsules.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol, both of which can increase dryness. Don't use mouthwashes containing alcohol.
- If you smoke – Stop!
- Clean dental prostheses every day with an anti-fungal preparation and avoid wearing them at night. Talk to your dentist about prescription therapies available to help with oral candidiasis. Sometimes a combination of treatments is necessary if the problem is severe.
- For maintenance once thrush is under control, discuss with your dentist frequent use of a magic mouthwash with diphenhydramine, nystatin, and Maalox. A chlorhexidine gluconate rinse can also be helpful (and if you wear dentures, it's good for cleaning those!)
- Check the Sjögren's Foundation Product Directory – available online, free of charge to all members – to see the many products available for dry mouth.

For more information on Sjögren's, visit the Foundation website at www.sjogrens.org, call 301-530-4420, email info@sjogrens.org, or write to the Sjögren's Foundation, 10701 Parkridge Blvd, Ste 170, Reston, VA 20191