MANAGING DRY MOUTH

Goal	Consideration
Relieve dryness	Frequent sips of water, sugar-free gum / lozenges, saliva substitutes, nighttime humidifier
Stimulate saliva	Sugar-free gum or candy when residual salivary function is present
Reduce irritation	Avoid tobacco, excess alcohol, and alcohol-based mouthrinses; limit irritating foods / drinks
Prevent caries	Fluoride toothpaste; consider prescription-strength or professional fluoride based on risk
Monitor complications	Watch for candidiasis, mucosal irritation, and difficulty eating / swallowing

When to discuss dry mouth:

- In general, during routine visits
- When a patient reports dryness or discomfort
- When a patient is on multiple medications
- When a patient shows signs of increased caries risk without other clear cause



Dry mouth is NOT a normal part of aging: if left unaddressed, it affects speaking, eating, and increases risk of caries.