

Does a dry mouth make swallowing tricky?



A common symptom of Ectodermal Dysplasia (ED) is lack of or malfunctioning salivary glands. It can have a huge impact on some individuals and creates a lot of challenges.

ED causes the salivary glands to produce a reduced amount of saliva resulting in a very dry mouth and a hoarse raspy voice, that many people with [hypohidrotic ectodermal dysplasia](#) (HED) experience.

Certain foods are more difficult than others to eat and swallow due to a lack of saliva. Difficulty swallowing and choking are two common problems which adults and children can face.

The Society frequently speak with parents of children affected by ED who share their concerns about their child choking. Children affected by ED are typically missing many teeth already which, with the added issue of reduced saliva, chewing and swallowing becomes even more difficult.

Lack of saliva and choking in children can of course be a big worry, and extremely frustrating for the child.

In addition to this, individuals may lack some of the glands within the throat and gullet which means that food easily lodges in the throat and leads to choking.

Many children manage a normal diet even without teeth, but others find many foods difficult to swallow, particularly dry food and rice. Pasta is a good substitute for rice.

How to help ease a dry mouth yourself –

DO:

- drink plenty of cold water – take regular sips during the day and keep some water by your bedside at night
- suck on ice cubes or ice lollies
- sip on cold unsweetened drinks
- chew sugar-free gum or suck on sugar-free sweets
- use lip balm if your lips are also dry
- brush your teeth twice a day and use alcohol-free mouthwash – you are more likely to get [tooth decay](#) if you have a dry mouth



DON'T:

- do not drink lots of alcohol, caffeine (such as tea and coffee) or fizzy drinks
- do not use acidic artificial saliva products (like Glandosane aerosol spray) if you have your own teeth
- do not have foods that are acidic (like lemons), spicy, salty or sugary
- do not smoke
- do not sleep with dentures in
- do not stop taking a prescribed medicine without getting medical advice first – even if you think it might be causing your symptoms

Supporting a normal lifestyle

Ectodermal Dysplasia Society (Registered Charity No. 1089135). Disclaimer: Any views or opinions are made by the author in good faith. No liability whatsoever is accepted by the author or the Ectodermal Dysplasia Society. Recipients should make their own additional enquiries of medical and other relevant authorities before acting on these views. The use of a product name does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by the author or the Society.

You can also get help from your local pharmacist and ask about treatments you can buy to help keep your mouth moist.

You can get:

- gels
- sprays
- tablets or lozenges.



Supporting a normal lifestyle

Ectodermal Dysplasia Society (Registered Charity No. 1089135). Disclaimer: Any views or opinions are made by the author in good faith. No liability whatsoever is accepted by the author or the Ectodermal Dysplasia Society. Recipients should make their own additional enquiries of medical and other relevant authorities before acting on these views. The use of a product name does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by the author or the Society.