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**GUEST ARTICLE: UNITED CONCORDIA DENTAL**

**UNITED CONCORDIA<sup>®</sup> DENTAL**

## **FIGHTING DRY MOUTH DURING COVID-19**

The stress of the pandemic can be overwhelming. In fact, the number of adults suffering from depression symptoms has more than tripled during COVID-19.<sup>1</sup> Even wearing a face mask can cause anxiety.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, both antidepressants and masks can cause yet another issue – dry mouth.



### **Antidepressants and dry mouth**

Dry mouth is a possible side effect of antidepressants and anti-anxiety meds. More than 400 over-the-counter and prescription medications can cause or worsen oral dryness, including antidepressants and muscle relaxants.<sup>3</sup>

### **Mask wearing = mouth breathing?**

For some, face masks can cause a feeling of panic. It might be tempting to shove your mask in your purse or car, avoiding it until absolutely necessary. But [masks can start to stink](#) if they aren't stored or cleaned properly. To avoid those nasty scents, you might start breathing through your mouth. This dries out saliva, which can lead to dry mouth.

### **Symptoms of dry mouth**

You may have a sore throat, burning in your mouth, trouble talking and difficulty swallowing.<sup>4</sup> Dry mouth can also lead to inflamed gums, cavities, gum disease and other oral issues.<sup>5</sup>

### **So what's the fix?**

Make sure to keep up with your daily home-care routine. Brush at least twice and floss once every day. Plus, stay hydrated by sipping water throughout the day. You can also chew sugar-free gum to stimulate your own saliva. Your dentist may also recommend products that can help.

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For more information on how to keep your mouth clean and healthy, visit United Concordia's [Dental Health Center](#). If you have any concerns about your oral health, talk to your dentist or dental hygienist about what to do.

1. [Prevalence of Depression Symptoms in US Adults Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#); jamanetwork.com; September 2020
2. [How to Overcome Mask Anxiety](#); Health Essentials from Cleveland Clinic; September 2, 2020.
3. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, National Institutes of Health; 2000
4. [Dry Mouth](#); mouthhealthy.org; 2020
5. [Dental Implications of Xerostomia](#); ada.org; July 2019