

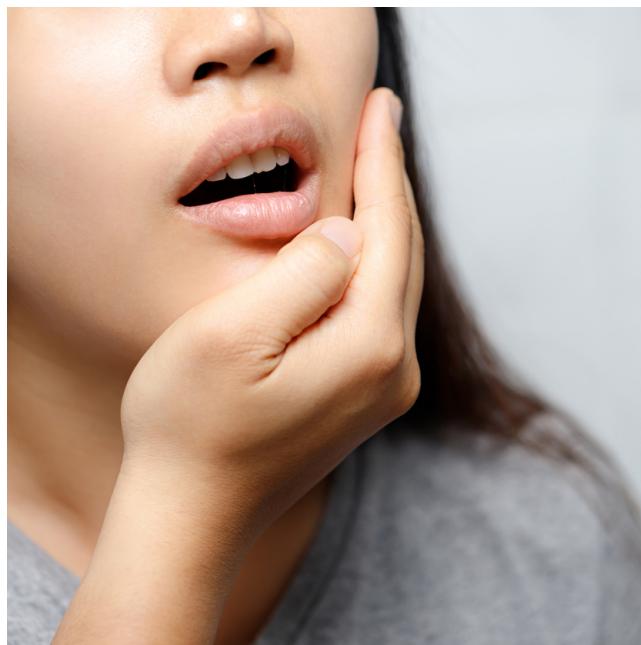


# Effects of different medication on oral health

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Medication is prescribed or dispensed to any individual who requires it. The intention is to achieve better health and improve quality of living. Unfortunately, there are side effects to most types of medication. Some chronic condition medication including but not limited to cardiovascular conditions, neurovascular disease or skeletal problems have negative side effects on teeth or overall oral health.

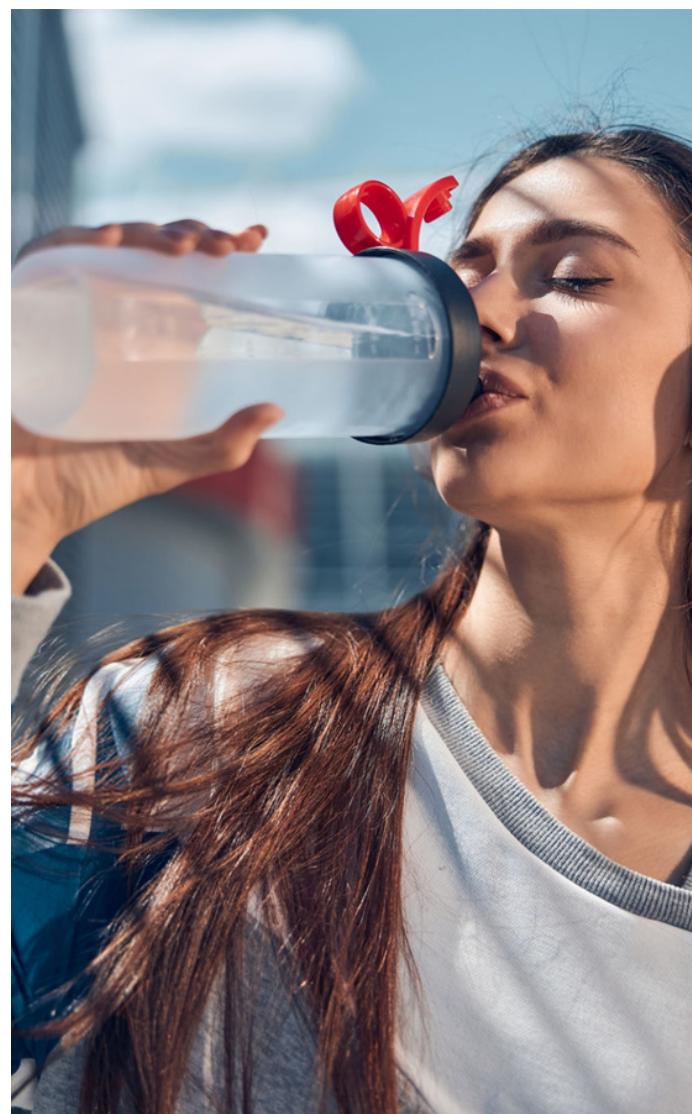
## Common oral side effects of medication

### Xerostomia - Dry mouth

There are drugs that alter the functioning of salivary glands which are organs that create and secrete saliva into the oral cavity. The drugs will therefore cause the glands to produce less saliva making the mouth to feel uncomfortably dry. The purpose of saliva is to cleanse the oral cavity and have a buffering effect on the teeth. This protects teeth from high plaque accumulation and carious lesions.

### Management of Xerostomia

Drink lots of water to keep hydrated. Your mouth is dry due to the glands not being stimulated to produce saliva and little to no secretion of saliva at all. Sugar free gum is recommended to stimulate saliva production. Unfortunately, those with permanent damage of the salivary gland, the recommended product is oil-based mouth rinses for lubrication and to avoid mouth burns from other products especially oral hygiene products containing chlorhexidine.



## Oral infections

The most common infection is oral candidiasis, which is a fungal infection. It has a white yeast-like presentation on the soft tissues of the oral cavity. It is mainly caused by immunosuppressing medication and certain inhalers for asthma.

### Management of oral fungal infections

Rinse your mouth with water after the use of inhalers and frequently change your toothbrush. Using one toothbrush for prolonged period of time will cause re-occurrence of the fungus. Fungi colonizes in the toothbrush and multiplies.



### **Inflamed gums**

Some medication causes gum overgrowth, the most common one is Phenytoin which occurs in epileptic patients and other antihypertensives. The presence of plaque and accumulation of calculus will aggravate the gum growth.

### Management of inflamed gums

Patients are normally advised to rinse with salt water and maintain good oral hygiene.

## Mucositis – Inflamed lining of the mouth

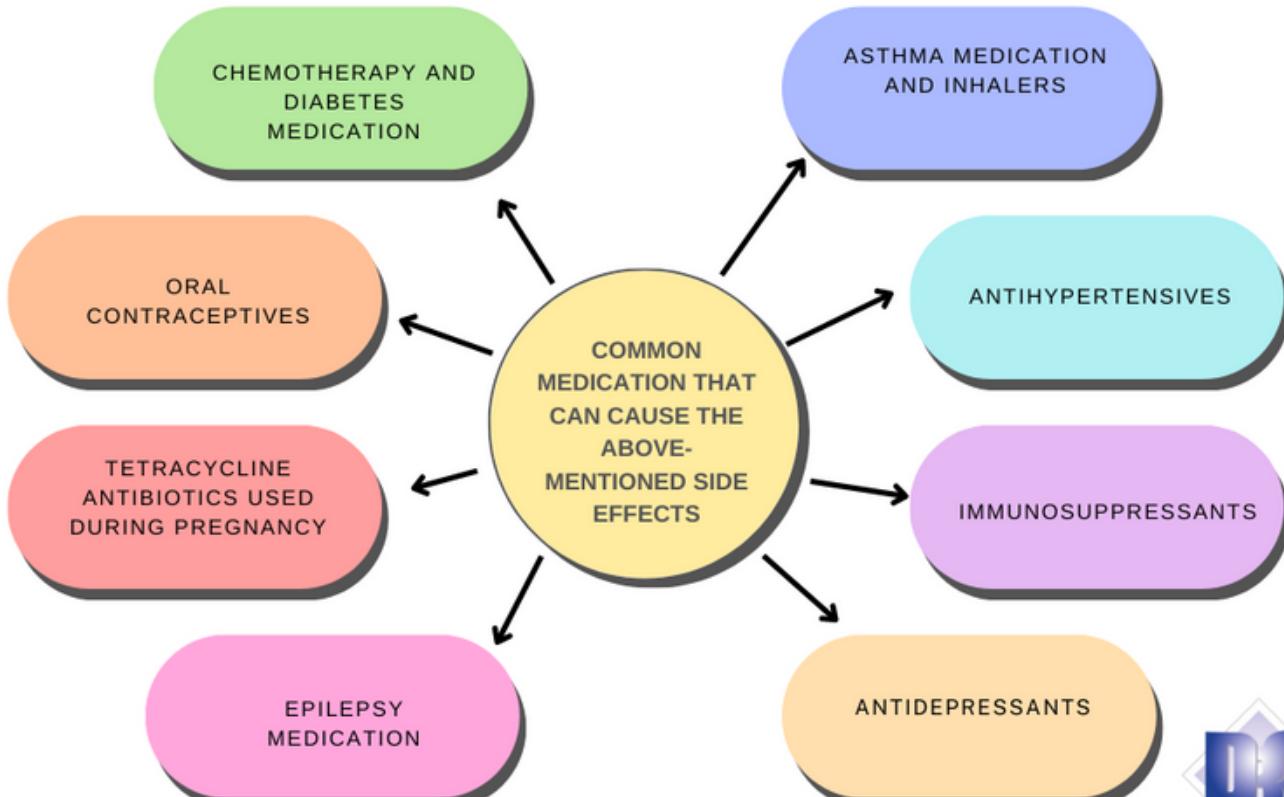
This is the inflammation of the soft and slippery lining tissue of the mouth and digestive tract. It is commonly seen in patients receiving treatment for cancer (chemotherapy and radiotherapy). The patients will complain of pain and sensitivity in the oral cavity. Brushing and maintaining good oral hygiene for these patients is normally a challenge. The use of tobacco and alcohol, dehydration or having underlying health conditions such as HIV or diabetes contributes further to the development of mucositis.

### Management of mucositis

Keeping hydrated so that the oral cavity remains cool. These patients may also use oil-based mouth rinse to soothe the lining. Use toothpaste that does not have mint or any products with a burning sensation.



OTHER COMMON ORAL SIDE EFFECTS INCLUDE TASTE CHANGES (MAINLY A METALLIC TASTE), MOUTH ULCERS, TOOTH DECAY AND TEETH DISCOLORATION.



The purpose of all the medication is to help patients. Some side effects may be very uncomfortable however managing them increases the chance of better compliance to medication and overall improvement of a person's health.