Dental professionals will need more difficult to treat. In the latter case, dental professionals will need to provide care for.

Although not limited to the elderly, xerostomia (dry mouth) is a common condition amongst this age group, due to age and prescription drug use. Saliva cleanses and moistens the mouth, aids food digestion; and contains an antibody that prevents harmful bacteria forming inside the mouth. Therefore, a lack of saliva can have a negative impact on a patient's personal and social life, affecting speech and mastication. It also leaves sufferers more vulnerable to oral infections, which can lead to halitosis, in extreme cases.

There are many causes of this uncomfortable, and sometimes painful, condition. It can be the result of a lifestyle or a side-effect of essential medications or an illness, making it more difficult to treat. In the latter case, dental professionals will need to help patients manage dry mouth. To successfully do this, it is vital that the dental team understand what products are available to help provide a long-term solution.

Tremendous dry mouth
Saliva replacement gels, which contain natural enzymes found in normal saliva, can help moisturize dry mouth, whilst effectively supporting the saliva's natural defences, and nourishing and strengthening gums. However, for these gels to successfully do this, they must contain the following ingredients:

- **Carboxymer**
  - Carboxymer produces a transparent, lubricating and moisturizing film that coats the soft tissue mucosal surface to hold in moisture and provide relief to dry mouth. Carboxymer is white, fluffy powders frequently used in gels, cosmetics, personal and oral care products and are used to optimise the rheological properties of aqueous solutions. These polymers have the ability to absorb and retain water and expand many times their original size, thus increasing the flow of saliva.

- **Glucosyl Oxidase**
  - Glucosyl Oxidase is an enzyme that converts glucose to hydrogen peroxide and is added to oral care products to reduce the frequency of dry mouth complaints and increase saliva production. An essential element within the balance of the enzyme system, Glucosyl Oxidase is designed to boost and replenish saliva's own natural defenses whilst decrease oral bacteria. As a saliva substitute, Glucosyl Oxidase offers potential advantages to oral health and maintaining benefits and may be particularly useful before eating, speaking, and sleeping.

- **Lactoferrin**
  - Lactoferrin is a milk protein (lactoferrin) and is able to bind iron (ferrous). It is effective in mimicking the role of saliva by lubricating the oral cavity and controlling the existing normal oral microbiota. Lactoferrin is an essential human salivary defense protein and regularly used in oral care products, restoring the saliva’s own antimicrobial capacity in patients with dry mouth. Its anti-cariogenic and antibacterial agent helps iron absorption and immunomodulation (changing immune system) and is also known to help kill bacteria, fungi and viruses.

- **Lactoperoxydase**
  - Lactoperoxydase is a peroxidase, milk enzyme from mammary, salivary, and other mucosal gland that has natural antibacterial defense systems, and proves to be a useful ingredient for symptomatic therapy for those suffering from dry mouth syndrome (xerostomia). Its use in oral care products is to reduce oral bacteria and the acid produced by that bacteria and treat dry mouth. Lactoperoxydase can reduce plaque and treat gingivitis.

- **Glucose Oxidase**
  - Glucose Oxidase is an enzyme from milk (lacto) which is added to oral care products to replenish saliva's own natural defenses and maintain optimum oral care and prevent problems with the type of foods they could eat, speaking clearly and their general appearance. In light of this, it's also important for dental professionals to become familiar with what products are available to recommend to sufferers of dry mouth, which will not only help maintain optimum oral care and prevent problems, but also improve and enhance their quality of life.

**References**


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