

## DEPRESSION AND ORAL HEALTH

Depression affects 1 in 5 people at some point in their life. If it's not you, then maybe it's someone you know. Depression has a profound effect on all aspect of the sufferer's life, not the least being the state of their oral health, which can have long term effects even after recovery from the illness.



This translates in the mouth to poor oral hygiene, a diet high in sugars, high decay rate, decreased saliva flow, gum disease, decreased taste sensation and burning/tingling in the mouth.

Reduction in saliva flow is caused by the disease itself but also medications. Almost all medicines prescribed by psychiatrists cause dry mouth. To combat this, artificial salivary products can be used such as Xerostom mouthwash, Xerostom gel and Xerostom toothpaste. The high caries rate is caused by decreased oral hygiene, poor diet and reduced saliva. A depressed patient will not be motivated to seek the help of a dentist so it is important for carers to organize this with appropriately trained oral health professionals.