

INFORMATION ABOUT CONTROLLING EXCESS SALIVA

Excess saliva production (sialorrhea) is a very common problem in ALS patients. The disease does not cause the overproduction of saliva, like people often think, but instead weakens the throat muscles needed for regular swallowing. When not properly managed, sialorrhea can result in drooling, choking, or difficulty speaking.

Not only is it difficult to control, but it is also embarrassing and causes those suffering with this issue to stay home and feel isolated from their world. Isolation feeds depression and the downward spiral continues for a symptom that is treatable.

HOLISTIC SOLUTIONS

Managing excess saliva can be accomplished both holistically and through medication. Initially, we suggest drinking two glasses of tomato juice daily, if possible. Tomatoes contain high concentrations of lycopene, which is a natural reducer of salivary output. If stomach distress occurs, add a tablespoon of sugar to each glass to dilute the acid. Packing sea salt on the tongue, or sucking on olives or lemons has been known to provide some relief.

MEDICATIONS

If more aggressive treatments are needed, consider medications like amitriptyline, Nortriptyline, Atropine Sulfate (formerly known as Sal-tropine), and Scopalamine all can help control excess saliva. Our preference is for Atropine Sulfate, formerly known as Sal-tropine which requires a prescription but seems to be the most effective for many.

Atropine (Sal-Tropine) 0.4 mg tabs
Sig: 4-6 hours as needed for excessive saliva
Condition: Excessive Saliva

BOTOX ISSUES

Equally as important as our recommendations for controlling excess saliva are the things we do NOT recommend. We do not suggest the use of beta-blocker/SSRI or tricyclic prescriptions (such as amitriptyline) unless absolutely necessary, and we never endorse the use of salivary gland Botox injections due to countless reports of adverse side effects. The risks associated with Botox simply outweigh any benefits, and we do not support treatments that may put patients in danger.