

# Dental Health & Prostate Cancer

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UREF Prostate Cancer  
Support Group  
Meeting

Prostate  
Cancer  
Treatments  
That Affect  
Oral Health

Testosterone-blocking  
therapy (ADT, ARSIs)

Bone-strengthening  
medications

Chemotherapy

Pelvic radiation

# Testosterone Blocking Drugs

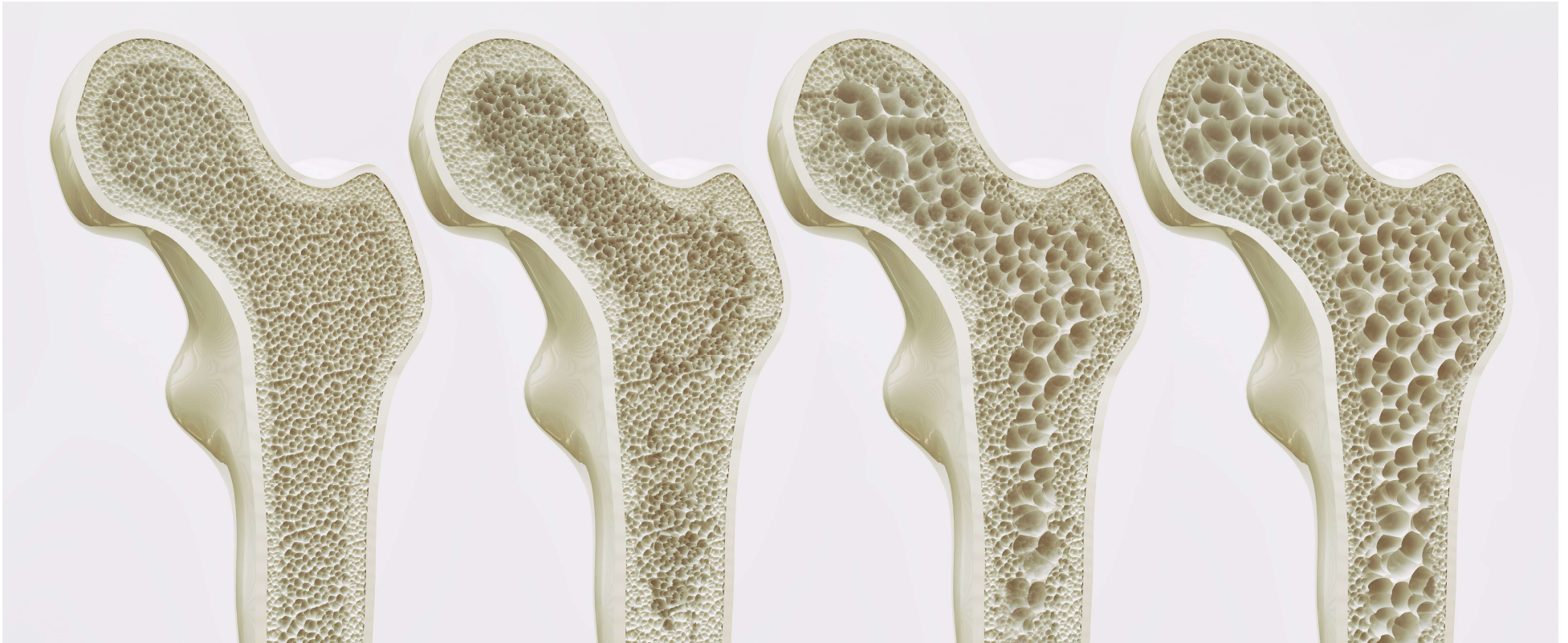
- Testosterone-blocking therapy (ADT, ARSIs)
  - ADT: Eligard, Lupron, Orgovox
  - ARSIs: Xtandi, Erleada, Nubeqa, Zytiga, Yonsa

# Testosterone Blocking Benefits

- Testosterone is primarily produced in the testis, but also in the adrenal glands and the cancer cells themselves
- Testosterone fuels the growth of prostate cancer cells
- ADT drugs lower blood levels of testosterone to slow the metastases of cancer cells

# Testosterone Blocking Detriments

- Lower hormone levels weaken bones
- Some of the Testosterone converts to Estrogen which controls osteoclast activity in bone remodeling



# Bone Building Medications & the Jaw

- Meds:
  - Denosumab (Xgeva/Prolia)
  - Zoledronic acid (Zometa)
- Rare risk: jaw bone damage  
(Advantages of taking the drugs outweigh disadvantages)
- Dental exam **BEFORE** starting is key  
(Have oral surgery prior to starting these drugs)



# Testosterone Blocking Detriments

- Dry Mouth



# Testosterone Blocking Detriments

- Dry Mouth leading to Inflamed gums



# Testosterone Blocking Detriments

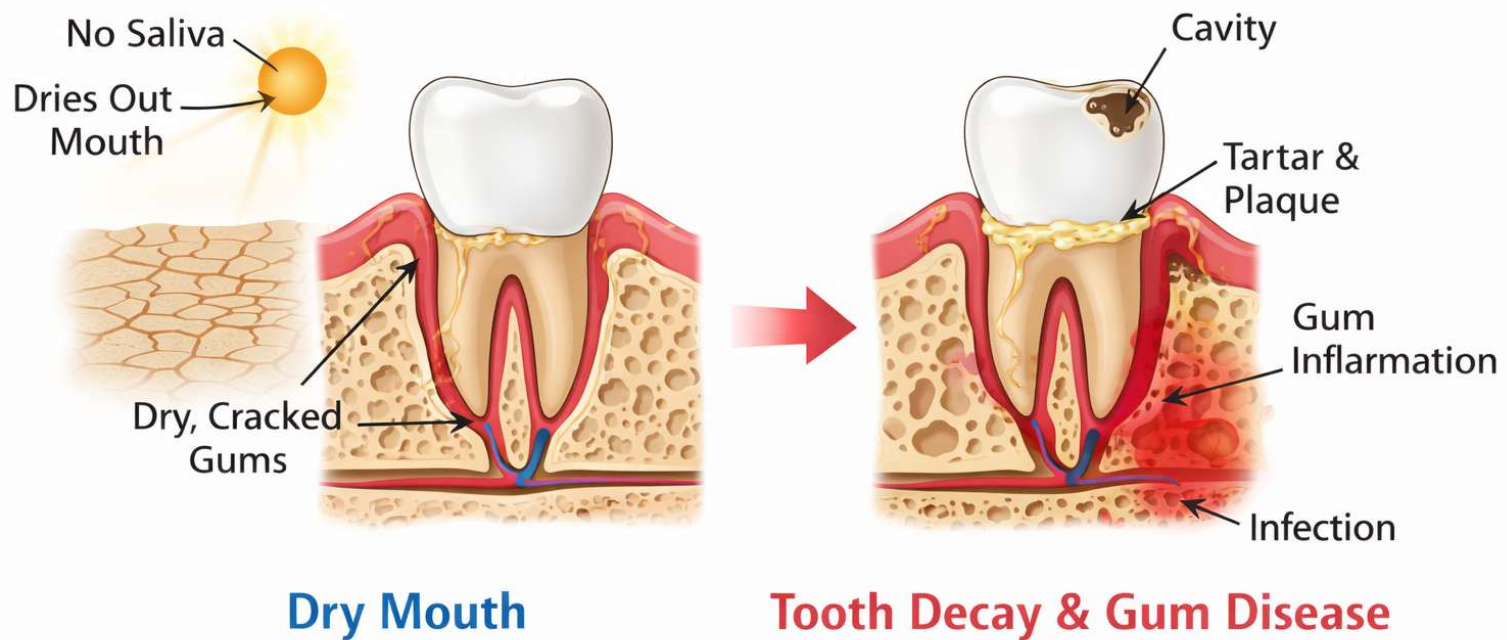
- Dry mouth leading to gum-line cavities

Low salivary flow cannot wash away food and dilute acids, leading to the demineralization of the teeth



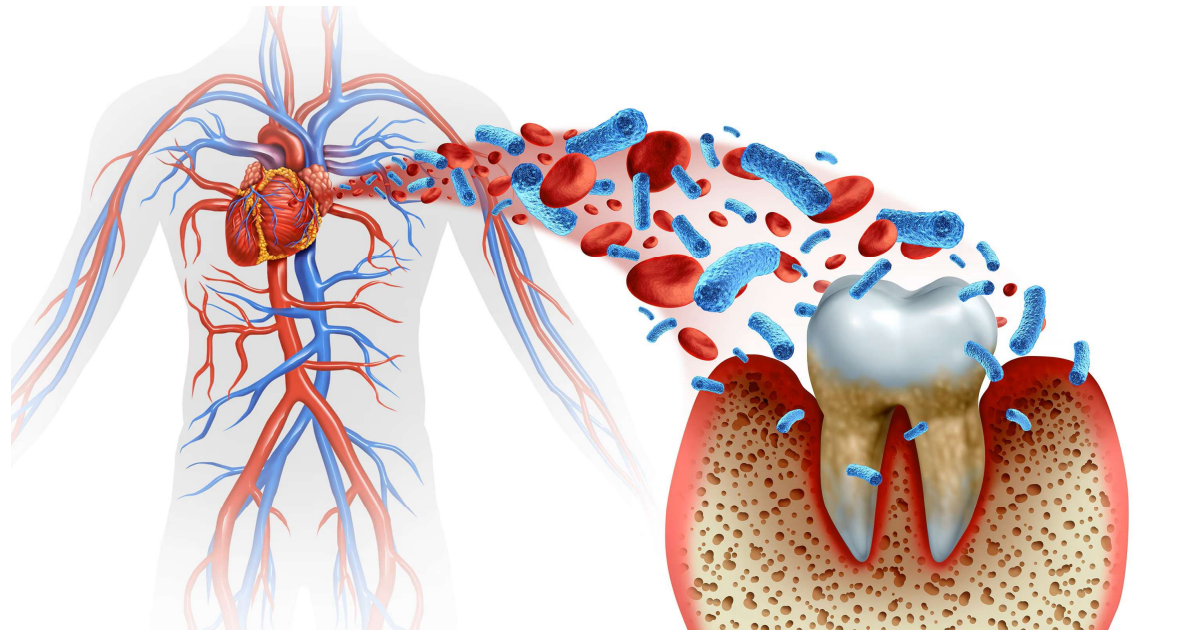
# Testosterone Blocking Effects

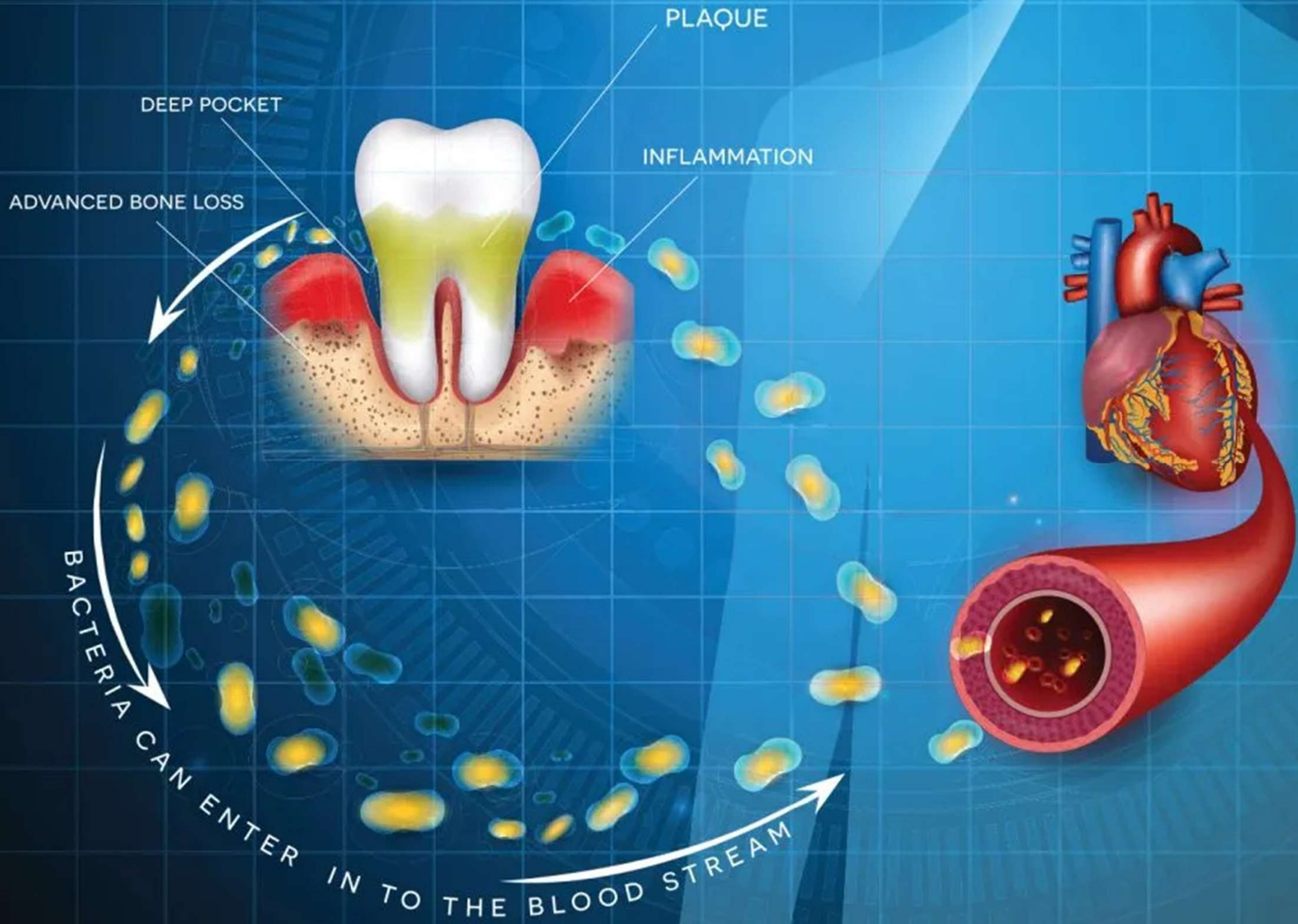
## Dry Mouth Can Lead to Tooth Disease



# Testosterone Blocking Detriments

- Coronary Artery Disease
- Men with poor oral hygiene are in double jeopardy of heart disease because the ADT puts the heart under more strain and the inflammation of gum disease subjects the heart to bacterial assault and more plaque buildup in the coronary arteries





# Treating Dry Mouth (Xerostomia)

## 1. Simple daily habits (first-line, works for most patients)

### Do:


- **Sip water frequently** (small sips all day, not large amounts at once) Keep water bottle handy
- **Sugar-free gum or lozenges** (xylitol preferred)
- At Bedtime:
  - Use a cool-mist humidifier at night (if you use a CPAP adjust humidification)
  - Brush teeth
  - Moisturize lips with lip balm
  - Possibly use: Biotene oral balance gel, ACT Dry mouth moisturizing gel, Xylimelts (adhering discs)

### Avoid:

- **Alcohol & caffeine** (worsen dryness)
- **Tobacco** (major contributor)

# Treating Dry Mouth (Xerostomia)

## 2. Tooth & gum protection (critical)


- Brush **twice daily** with **fluoride toothpaste**
- Use a **soft-bristle toothbrush**
- Consider **prescription fluoride gel or trays** if high cavity risk
- Floss daily *if gums are not bleeding excessively*
-  Dry mouth = higher cavity risk even with good brushing

## 3. Diet changes that help

- Limit **sugary and acidic foods**
- Avoid **dry, crumbly foods** (crackers, chips)
- Use sauces, gravies, soups
- Rinse mouth with water after meals

## 4. Medications that can help (for moderate–severe cases)

Ask your doctor or dentist about:

- **Pilocarpine (Salagen®)**
- **Cevimeline (Evoxac®)**
-  Not for everyone (can cause sweating, flushing)

# Chemotherapy & the Mouth

- Medications (docetaxel, cabazitaxel, etc.)
- Lowers resistance to infections
  - mouth infections can become systemic
- Mouth sores, ulcers, bleeding gums
- May cause delay of elective dental work



# Pelvic Radiation Considerations

- Fatigue → less oral care
- Dehydration → dry mouth
- Higher cavity risk



# What to Do Before Starting ADT, Chemo, Bone-building drugs or Radiation

**Schedule**

Schedule a dental check-up

**Finish**

Finish major dental work early

**Tell**

Tell your dentist about cancer treatment

# Daily Oral Care During Treatment

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Brush gently twice daily

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Floss correctly

40% of the tooth is left dirty without flossing

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Alcohol-free mouth rinse

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Sip water throughout the day

To stay hydrated

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Sugar-free gum for dry mouth to  
stimulate salivary flow

## When to Call For Help

- **Call your dentist:**
  - Tooth pain, gum inflammation and bleeding
- **Call your cancer team (oncologist, radiation oncologist, urologist):**
  - Fever, severe mouth sores, jaw pain

# Key Takeaways



Oral health is part of cancer care



Prevention reduces serious complications



Ask questions



*Keep Those Canines Healthy and Happy*