Anxiety is characterized by apprehension or fear of impending actual or imagined danger, vulnerability, or uncertainty and may be accompanied by restlessness, tension, tachycardia, and dyspnea unattached to a clearly identifiable stimulus. (ICD 9 code 300.0)

Depression is an unpleasant, but not necessarily irrational or pathological, mood state characterized by sadness, despair, or discouragement; it may also involve low self-esteem, social withdrawal, and somatic symptoms such as eating and sleep disturbance. (ICD 9 code 311.0)

**Oral Manifestations and Considerations**

**Oral**
- Neglect of oral hygiene leading to increased risk of dental caries and periodontal disease
- Poor nutrition
- Drug-induced xerostomia
- Some studies report a positive correlation with temporomandibular disorders and atypical facial pain.

**Other Potential Disorders/Concerns**
- Mitral valve prolapse and GERD
- Children with depression are at increased risk for engaging in high-risk behaviors (promiscuity, smoking, alcohol and drug abuse)

**Oral Side Effects of Commonly Prescribed Medications**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medication SYMPTOM</th>
<th>MEDICATION</th>
<th>SIDE EFFECTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>SSRIs, Atypical Antidepressants, and Tricyclic Antidepressants (TCA's)</td>
<td>Xerostomia, dysphagia, sialadenitis, dysgeusia, stomatitis, gingivitis, glossitis, tongue edema, discolored tongue, and bruxism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>SSRIs, Atypical Antidepressants, and Benzodiazepines</td>
<td>Xerostomia, dysphagia, sialadenitis, dysgeusia, stomatitis, gingivitis, glossitis, tongue edema, discolored tongue, and bruxism.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parent/Caregiver Support and Guidance

- Discourage consumption of cariogenic foods and beverages.
- Prescribe sugar-free medications, if available.
- Recommend preventive measures such as topical fluoride and sealants.
- Advise the use of fluoridated toothpaste twice daily and support the family in following dental care instructions.
- Instruct caregiver on appropriate protocol following dental trauma (locate/preserve missing tooth and put in cold milk; seek immediate professional care).
- Review safety issues appropriate to the age of the child, such as mouth guards to prevent oral-facial trauma.
- Recommend rinsing with water thoroughly after taking each dose of sugar-containing medication and frequent water intake for children taking xerostomic medications.
- Recommend preventive measures, such as topical fluoride and sealants.
- Refer to dentist any oral developmental abnormalities.

Additional information: Special Needs Fact Sheets for Providers and Caregivers

References


Additional Resources

- NIH Institute for Depression Disorder and NIH Institute for Anxiety Disorder
- Special Care: an Oral Health Professionals Guide to Serving Young Children with Special Health Care Needs
- Bright Futures Oral Health Pocket Guide
- American Academy of Pediatrics Oral Health Initiative
- MCH Resource Center
- ASTDD-Special Needs
- Block Oral Disease, MA
- NOHIC-NIDCR publications