



Tongue - Why are our tongues always wet?

Fact

- Our tongues are always wet because the moisture helps to stop friction when we use our mouths to talk and eat.
- Our saliva glands pump saliva into our mouths all the time.
- When our mouths are wet it makes it easier to speak.
- Saliva helps us chew our food. It mixes with the food and helps our tongues roll it into a wet ball so we can swallow it.
- We have taste buds on our tongues that work best when our tongues are wet.
- Saliva helps keep our mouth and teeth clean and hygienic by rinsing our mouth all day.

Do you know

- Saliva is a watery tasteless liquid that contains an enzyme called ptyalin which starts breaking down starchy food into simple sugars for your body to digest.
- Our saliva glands are under the sides of our tongue, in our cheeks near the front of our mouths and in our mouths just in front of our ears.
- Over one litre of saliva gets squirted into our mouth from our saliva glands every single day.
- One of the first things to dry up when our body doesn't have enough water is our saliva glands. When that happens, we feel thirsty and then we drink.
- The drier your mouth is the more likely you are to have bad breath.
- Drinking water every day helps your body produce lots of saliva and you need saliva to survive.

Experiments you can do

What you need:

Your own tongue

A small piece of biscuit or fruit

What you do:

Stick your tongue out and hold it out there until the water on it dries a bit. Then put the small piece of biscuit or fruit on your tongue and just hold it there. Can you taste the biscuit or piece of fruit? What can you taste?

Then put your tongue back in your mouth and just hold the food on your tongue for a while. What can you taste now?

Other Investigations

What you need:

Your own mouth

A Weet-Bix

A glass of water or milk

What you do:

Take a bite of the yummy dry Weet-Bix. Chew it up, then swallow and take another bite. Keep eating. What does the Weet-Bix taste like? What does it feel like in your mouth? Is it easy to eat?

Then take a sip of water and keep eating. What does the Weet-Bix taste like now?

What does it feel like? Is it easy to eat now?

Inspect your tongue. Poke it out while you're looking in a mirror. What colour is it on top and underneath? Find out what the sign of a healthy tongue is.

How much water do you drink in one day? Maybe you have pets. You need to give them fresh, clean water every day. How much water do they drink in one day?

Jokes

What did the tongue say to the teeth? I'm behind you all the way!