

Smokeless (Spit) Tobacco

Smokeless tobacco products consist of tobacco or a tobacco blend that is chewed or sucked on rather than smoked. It is placed inside the mouth.

Smokeless Tobacco Comes in These Forms:

Snuff – a pinch of ground-up moist tobacco usually placed between the bottom lip and gum. This is also referred to as "dipping".

Chew – shredded tobacco leaves placed between the cheek and gum. This is also referred to as "a wad".

Plug – shredded tobacco leaves which are pressed into a hard block and placed between the cheek and gum.

When using these products, a person needs to spit out 'tobacco juice' frequently. People who dip or chew spread their germs when they spit. This increases the risk of passing an infection to others.

Snus (pronounced snoos) is a newer smokeless, spitless tobacco product. It comes in a small pouch that you place between your lip and gum. It is left there for about a half-hour without the need to spit, then discarded.



Ingredients in Smokeless Tobacco

Nicotine:

Nicotine is a highly addictive drug found in all tobacco products: smokeless tobacco, cigarettes, cigars and pipe tobacco.

Carcinogens:

Over 28 cancer-producing chemicals have been identified in smokeless tobacco.

Sweeteners:

Because tobacco has an unpleasant taste, some brands of smokeless tobacco are heavily sweetened with sugars. This promotes cavities. Flavourings such as mint, licorice or cherry may be added to improve the taste.

Abrasives:

Tobacco leaves contain gritty materials which wear down the surfaces of teeth. These materials also scratch the soft tissues in the mouth, allowing the nicotine and other chemicals to rapidly get into the blood system.

Salt:

Flavouring salts are added to improve the flavour; however they can contribute to abnormal blood pressure.

Other Chemicals:

All tobacco products contain hundreds of other chemicals that can contribute to many health problems.

All Tobacco is Harmful

Smokeless tobacco is harmful to your health. People who dip or chew increase their risk of:

Cancer – The risk of certain types of cancer increases when you use smokeless tobacco. This includes esophageal cancer and various types of oral cancer, including cancers of the mouth, throat, cheek, gums, lips and tongue. Surgery to remove cancer from any of these areas can leave your jaw, chin, neck or face disfigured, and the cancer may be life-threatening. There is also an increased risk related to pancreatic cancer.

Precancerous lesion in area where tobacco is held.



Heart disease – Many believe that tobacco relaxes them, but instead it makes your heart beat faster, your breathing quickens and your blood pressure rises. Some evidence suggests that use of smokeless tobacco increases your risk of dying of certain types of heart disease and stroke.

Dental Disease– Smokeless tobacco contains sugar, which can contribute to cavities. It also contains coarse particles that can irritate your gums. Smokeless tobacco can cause stained teeth, persistent bad breath and black hairy tongue.



Tobacco users have a greater risk of developing gum disease.

Stomach problems – Swallowing tobacco juice may irritate the stomach and contribute to ulcers. It may increase the risk for stomach cancer.

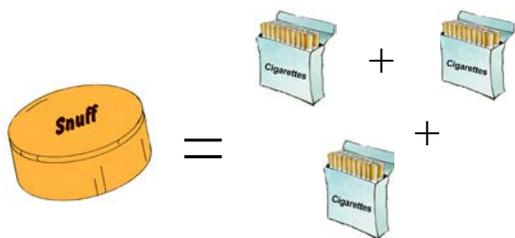
Loss of taste and smell – This can lead to loss of appetite which results in poor nutrition and poor general health.

Physical changes – Smokeless tobacco users can experience fatigue, muscle weakness, dizziness and decreased physical performance.

All Tobacco is Addictive

Addiction means getting hooked to a powerful drug called nicotine. In smokeless tobacco nicotine is rapidly absorbed into the bloodstream through the lining of the mouth. For some people, nicotine can be as addictive as cocaine or heroin.

Each tin of snuff contains a lethal dose of nicotine. One tin of snuff may have approximately the same amount of nicotine as 60 cigarettes.



Holding an average-sized dip or chew in your mouth for 30 minutes gives you as much nicotine as smoking approximately four cigarettes.

It doesn't take long to become hooked. Many find once they start it's hard to stop. If you're trying to stop using cigarettes, don't switch to smokeless tobacco instead.

Smokeless tobacco hasn't been shown to help you stop smoking and it has many health risks. You may end up using both cigarettes and smokeless tobacco.

Talk to your doctor, dentist, pharmacist, nurse or other healthcare professional about safer alternatives to quitting smoking.

Why do some athletes use smokeless tobacco?

Many try dipping out of curiosity or encouragement from a friend or team-mate. Some think that using tobacco will help them run faster and improve their physical endurance. In fact, the opposite may happen. You could experience muscle weakness, shortness of breath and decreased physical performance. Smokeless tobacco does not make you a better athlete!

Tobacco harms all users, some more severely than others.

Just because someone doesn't have any noticeable side effects from using smokeless tobacco, it doesn't mean they won't in the future. Mouth cancer is difficult to cure and can spread rapidly throughout the body.

- Former Chicago Cubs first-baseman Steve Fox chewed tobacco for six years. He developed white patches in his mouth and a sore on his tongue that didn't heal. His doctors told him he had mouth cancer. Half of his tongue had to be removed.
- Sean Marsee, an Oklahoma track star, started using snuff when he was 12 years old. He died of mouth cancer at the age of 19.
- Gruen Von Behrens, a young man from Illinois experienced mouth cancer at age 17 due to smokeless tobacco use. Gruen had more than 30 surgeries to save his life and to reconstruct his face. He dedicated his life to speaking to youth about the dangers of spit tobacco. He travelled to 50 US states and 10 Canadian provinces before his death at the age of 38.

Quit Tips for Smokeless Tobacco Users

Quitting tobacco is one of the most important things you will ever do for yourself and others. Some smokeless tobacco users say it is harder to quit than cigarettes.

Trying to quit may be difficult, but not impossible. Here are some tips to **spit it out and keep it out**.

- Make a list of all the reasons you want to quit. Keep it with you and look at it often.

Pick a quit date. Tell your friends, family and co-workers that you are quitting and want their support. Ask them not to use smokeless tobacco around you and not to offer you any, even if they think they are trying to help you.

- Talk to your doctor, dentist, pharmacist, nurse or other healthcare professional.
- Access individual, group or telephone counselling. Your chances for quitting successfully will be better.

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SMOKERS' HELPLINE

www.smokershelpline.ca

- Make it difficult to use tobacco; throw out all your chewing tobacco and snuff.
- Change daily routines to break away from tobacco triggers. Avoid situations or places where you usually use tobacco, such as activities with friends who smoke or chew, or while watching TV.
- When you have the urge to use tobacco, keep busy. Wash the car, the dog or the dishes. Take a walk or call a friend. Nicotine cravings last about 3-5 minutes. They will become fewer and farther apart the longer you stay tobacco-free.
- Stock up on healthy snacks such as carrots, fresh fruit, popcorn, sugarless gum/candy, nuts and sunflower seeds.
- Get rid of "tobacco mouth" by brushing your teeth and tongue several times throughout the day. When you have a nicotine craving, brush or floss your teeth instead – the craving will pass.
- Exercise can reduce symptoms of cravings and withdrawal and help with weight control.
- Get rid of the nicotine in your body. Drink lots of water.
- Estimate how much money you will save by not using tobacco – you may be surprised.
- Reward yourself frequently. Quitting may be hard and you deserve credit for your efforts.



For more information, go online to:

Health Canada

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hc-ps/pubs/tobac-tabac/smokeless-sansfume/index-eng.php>

Canadian Cancer Society

<http://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-101/what-is-a-risk-factor/tobacco/?region=sk>

American Cancer Society

<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Tobacco/smokeless>

Canadian Dental Association

http://www.cda-adc.ca/en/oral_health/complications/tobacco/smokeless.asp?intPrintable=1

Saskatchewan Lung Association

<http://gotlungs.ca>

US National Institute of Dental and Cranial Research

<http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/OralHealth/Topics/SpitTobacco/>

Mayo Clinic

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/chewing-tobacco/CA00019>

PACT

<http://makeapact.ca>

Or contact an oral health professional at your local public health office.



**REMEMBER, ALL TOBACCO IS HARMFUL.
DON'T LET IT RUIN YOUR FUTURE!**