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· HEALTH

Smokeless Tobacco

Think Before You Chew

Tobacco and Nicotine

Many people think that smoking is the only way to take in nicotine. But smokeless tobacco users take in a large amount of nicotine and cancer-causing chemicals even if they do not light up.

The nicotine in smokeless tobacco is swallowed or absorbed through blood vessels in the mouth. Holding an average-sized dip in your mouth for 30 minutes gives you as much nicotine as smoking three cigarettes. And if you are addicted to nicotine, it will be difficult to stop using smokeless tobacco.



One can of smokeless tobacco has as much nicotine as 60 cigarettes or three packs.



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Smokeless tobacco (also called chewing tobacco, spit, dip, snuff, snus or chew) has over 3,000 chemicals, including 28 cancer-causing substances. People may think that smokeless means harmless, but nothing could be further from the truth. Both cigarettes and smokeless tobacco can harm your health.

Smokeless tobacco can affect your oral health as well as your overall health. It can lead to gum disease and tooth loss. Your teeth and tongue can become brown and stained.

The regular use of spit tobacco also leads to a physical addiction to nicotine. Your dentist can help you quit.



Sores, receding gums and tobacco stains often result from using smokeless tobacco.

Why Quit Tobacco?

- **Your mouth will be healthier.**
Quitting smokeless tobacco can lower your risks for receding gums, gum disease, bone loss of the jaw, and tooth loss. Users' gums pull away from their teeth where the tobacco is held. When this happens, the gums usually do not grow back.
- **Your appearance will improve.**
Bad breath, stained teeth that cannot be cleaned by brushing, and drooling saliva are all results of using smokeless tobacco.
- **You will save money.**
The amount a user spends each week can add up to hundreds, even thousands, of dollars a year.
- **You will set a healthy example.**
Be a role model for your family and friends, especially children. You may even inspire others to give up smokeless tobacco when you quit.



Smokeless tobacco users are at higher risk of gum disease, which can lead to tooth loss.

Resources to Quit Tobacco

National Network of Tobacco Cessation Quitlines
1-800-QUITNOW (1-800-784-8669)
1-800-332-8615 (TTY)

Callers can speak with a counselor as well as receive informational materials and referrals to other helpful sources.

Tips to Quit Smokeless Tobacco

1. Make a list of your own personal reasons for quitting.
2. Set a date to quit in the near future and stick to it. Choose a "low stress" time to quit.
3. Ask your dentist, physician, family, friends and coworkers for their support in helping you quit.
4. Ask your dentist or physician about products that may help your body gradually get used to life without nicotine.
5. When you have a tobacco craving, find a healthy substitute such as sugarless gum, sugar-free hard candy, sunflower seeds or carrot sticks.
6. When you crave tobacco, think about the 4 D's:
 - **Delay** - the craving will pass in 5-10 minutes.
 - **Drink water** - it gives you something to hold in your hands and put in your mouth.
 - **Do something else** - distract yourself by being active.
 - **Deep breathing** - deep inhalations and exhalations relax you.

Smokeless Tobacco: A Guide for Quitting
www.smokefree.gov

Find the search box and type in "smokeless." This website provides information to help you understand your addiction and form a plan to quit.