

STEP P

STATE TOBACCO EDUCATION
& PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP

WHAT IS SMOKELESS TOBACCO?

SMOKELESS TOBACCO IS COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS SPIT, DIP, CHEW, PLUG, WAD, PINCH AND QUID. SMOKELESS TOBACCO USERS DRASTICALLY INCREASE THEIR RISKS OF ORAL CANCERS OF THE LIP, TONGUE, CHEEKS, GUMS, FLOOR AND ROOF OF THE MOUTH, THROAT, LARYNX AND ESOPHAGUS. USING SMOKELESS TOBACCO CAN ALSO CAUSE CANCERS OF THE STOMACH, PANCREAS AND PROSTATE.³

SPIT, DIP, CHEW...

There are two types of smokeless tobacco: Chew and Snuff.

Chew comes in loose-leaf, plug (compressed) or twist forms. A wad of chew is put inside the cheek.

Snuff is more finely ground and is packaged dry, moist or in tea bag like pouches. Snuff is typically placed between the cheek and gum. Sniffing (inhaling dry snuff through the nose) is more common in Europe than in the United States.

WHY DO PEOPLE USE SPIT TOBACCO?

Between 10 and 16 million Americans use smokeless tobacco products every year.¹

People may be attracted to smokeless tobacco because of:

- increased smoking restrictions in schools, worksites and public places,
- misconceptions that smokeless tobacco is a good alternative to cigarettes and presents minimal health risks,
- misconceptions that smokeless tobacco improves athletic performance,
- increased advertising expenditures by tobacco companies promoting smokeless tobacco products,
- marketing offers of gifts, gear and coupons,
- and the emergence of milder and sweeter brands.

WHO USES SMOKELESS TOBACCO IN COLORADO?

- Twenty-seven percent of high school males and nine percent of high school females report having used smokeless tobacco.²
- Thirty-four percent of adult men and five percent of adult women report having used smokeless tobacco.²
- Current use of smokeless tobacco is more common among male high school students than it is among adult men.²
- Eight percent of adult males, twelve percent of high school males and two percent of middle school males currently use smokeless tobacco.²
- Less than one percent of adult females, three percent of high school females and one percent of middle school females currently use smokeless tobacco.²
- More high school males living in rural areas (17 percent) currently use smokeless tobacco compared to their urban and suburban counterparts (8 percent and 13 percent, respectively).²
- More adult males in rural areas (19 percent) currently use smokeless tobacco than urban adult males (11 percent) and suburban adult males (7 percent).²

WHY ISN'T SMOKELESS TOBACCO A GOOD SUBSTITUTE FOR CIGARETTES?

Smokeless tobacco contains two to three times the nicotine as cigarettes as well as numerous cancer-causing agents.

Smokeless tobacco contains 28 cancer-causing agents and many other dangerous chemicals, including:

- formaldehyde (embalming fluid)
- arsenic (rat poison)
- acetaldehyde (irritant)
- hydrazine (toxic chemical)
- cadmium (used in car batteries)
- polonium (nuclear waste)
- cyanide (used in the gas chamber), and
- lead (banned from paint products).⁴

WHY IS NICOTINE ADDICTIVE?

Nicotine from smokeless tobacco is absorbed more slowly than that from cigarettes. However, more nicotine per dose is absorbed and remains in the bloodstream for a longer period of time.⁴

Nicotine is highly addictive and contributes to:

- increased heart rate,
- high blood pressure,
- stroke,
- increased risk of heart disease, and
- reproductive disorders.⁵

STEP P

STATE TOBACCO EDUCATION
& PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP

HOW DOES USING SMOKELESS TOBACCO INCREASE MY RISK OF CANCER?

- Smokeless tobacco users drastically increase their risks of oral cancers of the lip, tongue, cheeks, gums, floor and roof of the mouth, throat, larynx and esophagus. It can also cause cancers of the stomach, pancreas and prostate.³
- Smokeless tobacco is responsible for more than 30,000 oral cancer diagnoses and more than 8,000 oral cancer related deaths in the United States each year.⁵
- On average, only half of those with oral cancer will survive more than five years. This is the second lowest survival rate of all cancers (second only to lung cancer).⁶
- Seventy-three percent of daily smokeless tobacco users have leukoplakia – white sores or patches in the mouth that can become cancerous.³

WHAT ARE OTHER HEALTH AND PERSONAL CONCERNS?

Other health and social implications of smokeless tobacco use include chronic bad breath, yellowing of the teeth, tooth abrasion (worn spots on the teeth), tooth decay, tooth loss, gum disease, gum recession and loss of bone in the jaw.³

HOW CAN I GET HELP QUITTING TOBACCO?

Call the Colorado Quitline at 1-800-639-QUIT (7848) or log onto www.co.quitnet.com for free assistance and tips on quitting.



REFERENCES

¹ National Spit Tobacco Education Program. Retrieved December 28, 2004, from <http://www.nstep.org>.

² Levinson A.H. (2002). Use in Colorado of non-cigarette tobacco (NCT) (No. 5 of a series). Colorado Tobacco Attitudes and Behaviors Survey, 2001.

³ American Cancer Society. Smokeless tobacco: Highly addictive and no safer than smoking. Retrieved December 28, 2004 from http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED_10_2x_Smokeless_Tobacco_and_Cancer.asp?sitearea=PED.

⁴ National Cancer Institute. Smokeless tobacco and cancer: Questions and answers. Retrieved December 28, 2004 from http://cis.nci.nih.gov/fact/10_15.htm.

⁵ Office on Smoking and Health; (2004). The health consequences of smoking: A report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.

⁶ National Cancer Institute. Smokeless tobacco: Health and other effects. Retrieved December 28, 2004 from http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/tcrb/less_effects.html