

## Smokeless Tobacco Fact Sheet

Another form of tobacco is one that is called "Smokeless". Tobacco without smoke, how dangerous can it be? The name makes it sound safe, doesn't it? It was thought up by the tobacco industry because they wanted it to sound harmless. A better name for it is "spit" tobacco. Spit tobacco comes in two forms: snuff and chewing tobacco. Snuff can be either moist or dry. Moist snuff users place a small amount of finely cut tobacco (loose or wrapped in a paper packet that looks like a tea bag) between their gum and cheek. This is sometimes called "dipping." Dry snuff can be inhaled into the nose. People who use chewing tobacco place a wad of shredded tobacco leaf in their cheek. No matter what form it comes in, no matter if it's dipped or chewed, spit tobacco is highly addictive and dangerous. The tobacco companies, through their advertising and tricks, lead kids to believe spit tobacco is a safe alternative to cigarettes. A lot of kids get addicted to it before they know the facts. They see the ads and promotions from the tobacco industry linking spit tobacco with sports, rodeos, rock stars, and monster trucks. The tobacco industry makes dipping look so cool that kids don't think about getting addicted or about how dangerous it is.

- Spit Tobacco is Addictive
- An average sized "dip" in the mouth for 30 minutes delivers as much nicotine as 4 cigarettes.
- Users of spit tobacco have the same withdrawal symptoms as smokers when trying to quit.

### Spit Tobacco Causes:

- Tooth Abrasion - Tobacco companies add grit and sand to the tobacco which scratches teeth and wears away the hard surface or enamel.
- Stained brown teeth and bad breath
- Gums to pull away from your teeth. This can result in loosened teeth that can be permanently lost.
- Bone loss around the teeth
- Abrasion of the teeth
- Bad breath
- Elevated heart rate - The nicotine in tobacco causes your heart to beat faster and your blood pressure to go up.
- Leukoplakia - Appears in the mouth either as a smooth, white patch or as leathery-looking wrinkled skin. Leukoplakia can result in cancer.
- Oral Cancer - All forms of smokeless tobacco contain high amounts of cancer-causing chemicals. They keep users at an increased risk of oral cancer as well as cancer of the pharynx, larynx, and esophagus.

## Early signs of cancer

When cancer starts, it's not usually painful. If you use spit tobacco, or have in the past, you should be on the lookout for some of the early signs of oral cancer:

- A sore that does not heal
- A lump or white patch
- A prolonged sore throat
- Difficulty in chewing
- Restricted movement of the tongue or jaws
- A feeling of something in the throat

All tobacco users need regular dental check-ups. Even if you don't see a problem today, see your doctor or dentist every three months to have your mouth checked. Your chances for a cure are higher if oral cancers found early. Unfortunately, some don't learn that spit tobacco can kill until it's too late. They don't know that spit tobacco is like a time bomb. You never know when it will go off. It can strike at any time, at any age



.Eighteen year old Sean Marsee had been in perfect physical shape. He had always taken excellent care of his body. Sean watched his diet, lifted weights, and ran five miles a day six months of the year. He didn't smoke or drink, but he had used "smokeless" tobacco, then snuff since he was 12 Sean didn't believe his mother when she tried to tell him how dangerous it was... not until he heard the throat specialist say that the angry red spot on his tongue didn't look good. Sean's dipping had caused cancer which resulted in several operations. First, a part of Sean's tongue had to be removed. Soon the cancer spread and neck surgery was necessary. Finally, part of Sean's jaw bone had to be cut out. The surgeries couldn't save Sean. As with most of its victims, the cancer had spread quickly. Near the end, when Sean could no longer speak, he wrote a note that said to tell others, "Don't dip snuff."