

# ***Keep Smokeless Tobacco Out***

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## ***What is Chewing and Dipping?***

Tobacco is chewed by placing a golf-ball size wad between the cheek and teeth and sucking on it. Snuff is dipped by placing a pinch between the lower lip and teeth where it mixes with saliva and is absorbed. The user has an increased amount of saliva and must either swallow the tobacco juices or spit often.

## ***Save Your Life***

More than 9,000 people die every year from oral cancers. Using spit tobacco increases your chances of developing cancer in many parts of your mouth, neck, and head. After expensive, often painful treatments, dying from cancer is still a tragic reality every year for thousands of spit tobacco users. Therefore, spit tobacco is not a safe substitute for smoking.

## ***Risks of Smokeless Tobacco***

Smokeless tobacco can cause oral cancers and is associated with cancers of the esophagus, larynx, and stomach, and as well an increased risk of heart attacks and other cardiovascular diseases. 40-60% of smokeless tobacco users exhibit leukoplakia in the area where the wad is held (in the mouth), usually within a few months of beginning regular use.

Other oral side effects of smokeless tobacco include gingival recession, bad breath, and a loss of taste. Tobacco products decrease the user's ability to taste and smell salty and sweet foods, therefore chewers and dippers tend to use more salt. As a result, the excessive salt contributes to abnormal blood pressure and kidney disease.

Tobacco chewers are more likely to have an increase in dental caries as well due to the higher sugar content in the smokeless product.

The gums are likely to recede from the teeth in areas near where the tobacco is held. The bare roots are then more susceptible to decay and are more sensitive to heat, cold, air, certain foods and chemicals.

## ***Addiction***

The nicotine in smokeless tobacco is absorbed directly into the blood stream and is addicting. Spit tobacco users have similar, or even higher, levels of nicotine than smoker who use a pack or more a day. Withdrawal from regular smokeless tobacco use results in the same withdrawal symptoms and discomfort seen in heavy smokers attempting to quit.

## ***When Quitting Appears Difficult***

Quitting means fighting an addiction to nicotine, which is scientifically proven to be as strong as that of heroin and cocaine.

One approach to help you with quitting is nicotine gum. It helps to ease your body's craving for nicotine. As well, nicotine gum can give you a psychological boost by providing something to chew while it also helps you kick spit tobacco.

## ***Work to Get Through Withdrawal Symptoms***

- Tell your friends and family that you are quitting
- Take deep breaths of fresh air
- Enjoy your favorite exercise
- Brush your teeth
- Throw away any spit tobacco you have left as well as spitting cups and spittoons
- Avoid situations that will tempt you dip or chew
- Chew sugarless gum or candy
- Hang out with people who don't use smokeless tobacco

