



Fact Sheet on Smokeless Tobacco

Overview

According to the Centers for Disease Control, the two main types of smokeless tobacco consumed in the United States are chewing tobacco and snuff. Among military service members, 20% of Marines and 9% of Sailors regularly use smokeless tobacco products.

Myths and Facts

Myth: *Smokeless tobacco is a harmless alternative to smoking.*

Fact: Smokeless tobacco is still tobacco, which contains cancer-causing chemicals from the curing process. Note the warnings on the cans.

Myth: *It is easy to quit using dip or chew.*

Fact: Unfortunately, nicotine addiction makes quitting difficult. However, those who have quit successfully are very glad they did.

Smokeless Tobacco Products

- **Chewing Tobacco** is cured, flavored or sweetened tobacco that is packaged in foil pouches, wrapped in a leaf or twisted together resembling a rope. It comes in three forms; loose leaf, plugs, and twists. It is placed between the cheek and gums and must be chewed in order to release the nicotine.
- **Plugs** - are tobacco leaves that are pressed together to form a cake or "plug" and wrapped in a tobacco leaf. It is placed between the cheek and gums.
- **Twist** - are tobacco leaves that are twisted together to resemble a rope; pieces are cut off and placed between the cheek and gums.
- **Snuff** - is finely ground or shredded tobacco leaves that are fermented and packaged in tins or pouches that resemble small tea bags (also called snus). It is available in dry or moist forms. Snuff is placed between the lower lip and gum or cheek and gum. Using snuff is also called dipping.
 - **Snus** - (pronounced snoos) is a smokeless, spitless tobacco product. It comes in a tea bag like pouch that is placed between the lip and gum. The bag is kept in the mouth for about a half-hour. The tobacco juices are swallowed.

Newer Forms of Dissolvable Smokeless Tobacco Products

- **Sticks** - toothpick-sized sticks that can be placed in the mouth like a toothpick or broken up and placed between the cheek and gum. They are available in fresh, minty and mellow flavors.
- **Strips** - flat sheets of ground tobacco that work like dissolvable breath strips or even dissolvable medication strips for children.
- **Lozenges** - sweet or candy-like pellets of ground tobacco that dissolve in the mouth requiring no spitting of tobacco juices. Lozenges are not the same as the "Nicotine Lozenges" used to help with tobacco addiction.

Smokeless tobacco is **NOT** a safe alternative form of tobacco use. It contains 28 cancer-causing agents and increases the risk of developing cancer of the oral cavity. Smokeless tobacco may also cause many other health problems. Please visit the following websites for additional information.

Resources

NMCPHC Tobacco Cessation: http://www-nmcphc.med.navy.mil/Healthy_Living/

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids:

http://www.tobaccofreekids.org/facts_issues/fact_sheets/toll/products/smokeless/

QUIT TOBACCO: <http://www.ucanquit2.org/>