



### WHAT IF I DIP?

Dipping, spitting, or chewing, whatever the name, is disgusting and incredibly harmful to health. Smokeless tobacco is often marketed as the “safer” alternative to smoking. The advertising theory is, “If it’s only chewed and not smoked, it can’t possibly be harmful.” Nothing could be further from the truth. Years of medical research, cancer diagnoses and countless deaths have proved chewing tobacco to be on par with tobacco in other forms.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF SPIT TOBACCO

People have been chewing and using tobacco for centuries. During the early days of baseball, many players chewed tobacco and made it popular. From the 1950s, cigarettes grew more popular until the 1970s when the government began

to warn about the potential risks of smoking. Because of the decline in popularity of smoking, chewing tobacco grew in popularity. Today, like smoking, chewing tobacco is generally in decline.

### WHAT IS SPIT TOBACCO?

Spit tobacco is a drug that users ingest by placing it in between the bottom lip and gum. The actual drug itself is finely shredded and dried tobacco leaves. Users place it in their mouths and leave it between their gum and lip, sucking and chewing until saliva has built up, causing users to spit.



All tobacco contains the highly addictive substance **nicotine**. Nicotine raises blood pressure and causes nausea, dizziness, and heart palpitations. It also constricts blood vessels and increases heart rate. Because it increases the flow of dopamine, a neurotransmitter in the brain, nicotine creates feelings of pleasure, as well as a strong desire to maintain these feelings. Once dopamine levels drop in the brain, the user wants more nicotine to maintain the high. This is the cycle of nicotine addiction.

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Centers for Disease Control

[www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/smokeless/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/smokeless/index.htm)

### American Cancer Society

[www.cancer.org/healthy/stay-away-from-tobacco/health-risks-of-tobacco/smokeless-tobacco.html](http://www.cancer.org/healthy/stay-away-from-tobacco/health-risks-of-tobacco/smokeless-tobacco.html)

# SPIT TOBACCO

## THE NASTY TRUTH



### in the know

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## THE CYCLE OF ADDICTION

There's no doubt about it. Nicotine, like cocaine or heroin, is highly addictive. Just like other drugs, the user must seek an ever-stronger fix to satisfy the ever-growing craving for more of the drug. With repeated use, a user's brain becomes accustomed to nicotine, building a tolerance to the drug. When a nicotine user quits, the body goes into withdrawal. Withdrawal symptoms include:

- Irritability
- Impatience
- Hostility
- Anxiety
- Depressed mood
- Difficulty concentrating
- Restlessness
- Decreased heart rate
- Increased appetite or weight gain



If a user wants temporary relief from these symptoms, all they have to do is take another dip, thus continuing the cycle of addiction. Breaking the cycle is difficult, although not impossible.



## WHAT DOES DIPPING DO TO YOU?

Using spit tobacco comes with many problems, including:

- Constant spitting
- Stained teeth
- Bad breath
- Cracked and bleeding gums and lips
- Leukoplakia (mouth sores)
- Cancer in the lips, tongue, roof of mouth, cheeks, gums, stomach, throat, voice box, or bladder

Every dip is a risk, and the longer a user dips, the riskier it becomes. Each year more than 30,000 people get mouth or throat cancer. The surgeries used to save the lives of those with oral cancer include the removal of muscle, tissue, and bone in and around the affected area permanently damaged. Some lose portions of their gums and even their taste buds, thus losing their appetites in the process. Many people who get oral cancer from spit tobacco do not survive.

## THE NUMBERS

- 5.9 million adults report current use of smokeless tobacco.
- 4.8% of high school student report use of smokeless tobacco.
- Smokeless tobacco contains at least 28 cancer-causing chemicals.
- People who choose to dip are 27 times more likely to develop oral cancer than those who don't dip.
- Smokeless tobacco is the number one cause of mouth-related cancer.



## QUIT THE SPIT

Studies show that most people who use smokeless tobacco want to quit. But quitting spit tobacco, like cigarettes, can be difficult. To successfully quit, one must overcome the psychological and physical addiction of nicotine.

For some people it's difficult to get over the habit of using spit tobacco. Doing things like changing daily routines, eating hard candy, or chewing gum are all ways to fight cravings. Dealing with the psychological addiction and nicotine withdrawal at the same time is incredibly difficult. Substitutes like nicotine gum, patches, or inhalers, when used properly, can reduce withdrawal symptoms and help with quitting.

Help from counseling centers and other support groups can be very effective. It's tough to quit. Most addicts who kick the habit tried and failed many times before finally quitting spit tobacco. Each time you try to quit, the chances of success increase, so don't give up. The best way to avoid addiction is to never start.

 **Smokeless tobacco contains at least 28 cancer-causing chemicals.**

 **One can of snuff has as much x 60 nicotine as 60 cigarettes.**

 **Nicotine is a natural insecticide.**

**Avoid the nasty habit of spit tobacco, or quit NOW.**



“ Quitting spit tobacco, like cigarettes, can be a difficult but not impossible task. ”

**THE BEST WAY TO AVOID ADDICTION IS TO NEVER START.**