

The Effects of Tobacco

Addiction:

All tobacco including spit tobacco contains nicotine. The amount of nicotine absorbed from a can of spit tobacco equal to the amount delivered by 3 to 4 packs of cigarettes. Nicotine is absorbed more slowly from smokeless tobacco than from cigarettes, but more nicotine per dose is absorbed from smokeless tobacco than from cigarettes. Also, the nicotine stays in the bloodstream for a longer time.¹

Cancer:

Spit tobacco users increase their risk for cancer of the oral cavity. Oral cancer can include cancer of the:^{2,7,3}

- Lip, Tongue Cheeks, Gums, Floor and Roof of the mouth

Other Cancers associated with Spit Tobacco use are cancers of the:

- Pharynx, Larynx, Esophagus, Stomach, Pancreas.

Leukoplakia:

When you hold tobacco in one place in your mouth, your mouth becomes irritated by the tobacco juice. This causes a white, leathery like patch to form, and this called Leukoplakia. The patches can be different in size, shape, and appearance. They are also considered pre-cancerous.⁸

Heart Disease:

The constant flow of nicotine into your body causes many side effects including: increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, and sometimes irregular heart beats (this leads to a greater risk of heart attacks and strokes). Nicotine in the body also causes constricted blood vessels which can slow down reaction time and cause dizziness, not a good move if you play sports.⁸

Gum and Tooth and Disease and Decay:

Spit tobacco permanently discolors teeth. Chewing tobacco causes Halitosis (BAD BREATH). It's direct and repeated contact with the gums causes them to recede, which can cause teeth to fall out. Spit tobacco contains a lot sugar which, when mixed with the plaque on your teeth, forms acids and eats away at tooth enamel, causes cavities, and chronic painful soars. Tobacco companies add grit and sand to tobacco which scratches teeth and wears away enamel.⁹

Loss of sense and taste and smell:

Chewing tobacco lessens a person's sense of taste and ability to smell. As a result, users, tend to eat more salty foods, both of which are harmful if consumed in excess.⁹

Social Efforts:

The really bad breath, discolored teeth, gunk stuck on your teeth, and constant spitting can have a very negative effect on your social and love life. An even more serious effect of spit tobacco is oral cancer, and the surgery for this could lead to removal of parts of your face, tongue, cheek or lip.⁸



What is “Spit Tobacco” or as the Tobacco Industry likes to call it “Smokeless Tobacco”

The two main types of “Spit Tobacco” in the United States, are chewing tobacco and snuff. Chewing tobacco comes in the form of loose leaf plug and twist. Snuff is finely ground tobacco that can be dry, moist, or in sachets (bag-like pouches).¹ Although, some forms of snuff can be used by sniffing or inhaling into the nose, most smokeless tobacco users place the product in the cheek or in between their gum and cheek. Users then suck on the tobacco and spit out the tobacco juices, which why “smokeless tobacco” is often referred to as spit or spitting tobacco.² The term “smokeless tobacco” was created by the tobacco industry. “Smokeless” does not mean Harmless.

Oral (moist)Snuff: is finely cut, processed tobacco, which the user places between the cheek and gum, that releases nicotine, which in turn is absorbed by the membranes of the mouth.

Loose-Leaf Chewing Tobacco: is stripped and processed cigar-type tobacco leaves that are loosely packed to form small strips. It is often sold in a foiled lined pouch usually treated with sugar or licorice.

Plug Chewing Tobacco: consists of small, oblong blocks of semi-soft chewing tobacco that often contain sweeteners and other flavoring agents.

Nasal Snuff: is a fine cut powder that is sniffed into the nostrils. Flavorings may be added during the fermentation, and perfumes may be added after grinding.³

What’s in Spit Tobacco?

Smokeless Tobacco has been found to contain 28 Carcinogens (cancer causing agents)² As well as many other potentially harmful ingredients including:^{3,4,5}

- 30 different metals
 - Polonium 210 (nuclear waste)
 - N-Nitrosamines (carcinogen)
 - Formaldehyde (embalming fluid)
 - Cadmium (used in car batteries)
 - Cyanide
 - Arsenic
 - Benzene
 - Lead
 - Nickel
 - Nicotine
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Spit Tobacco Marketing

“The Spit Tobacco Industry has traditionally targeted male adolescents with its aggressive advertising. Ads associate Spit Tobacco with rodeos, rock stars, and sports heroes. Spit Tobacco companies have sponsored rock concerts, rodeos, auto racing, tractor pulls, hunting, and fishing events.”¹⁰ These ads have traditionally associated rugged, macho, and outdoorsy types.

Spit tobacco companies have more recently begun using trendy and carefully crafted ads that present it as a safer alternative to cigarettes or as an alternative to clean indoor acts. Spit tobacco is not a safe substitute for smoking, and Smokeless does not mean harmless.

As the market grows, so does the marketing:

- From 1985 to 1999 the total marketing expenditures of the top five spit tobacco companies in the US have more than doubled.¹
- During 2001, the five largest spit tobacco manufacturers spent \$236.7 million on spit tobacco advertising.¹
- The two most advertised brands are the two leading brands for users 12 years or older. Skoal (30 percent) and Copenhagen (22 percent).^{1,12}
- In 2001, US Smokeless Tobacco (a.k.a Skoal and Copenhagen) spent \$9.4 million for advertising in magazines with high youth readership. This is nearly double the amount spent before the *Smokeless Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement*. Nearly half of the company’s overall advertising (before and after the MSA) remains in youth oriented magazines.¹¹



1 Federal Trade Commission, Smokeless Tobacco Report 2003

2 National Cancer Institute http://dccps.nci.nih.gov/terb/less_default.html

3 Tobacco Free Kids http://dccps.nci.nih.gov/terb/less_default.html

4 Nicotine and Tobacco Research, Hatsukami, D&H Severenson 1999

5 Massachusetts Dental Society http://www.massdental.org/public/health.cfm?doc_id=1456

6 Center for Disease Control Smokeless Tobacco Fact Sheet

7 Missouri Department of Health via <http://www.well.com/user/woa/fssmkles.htm>

8 American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery http://well.etnet.org/healthinfo/tobacco/spit_tobacco.cfm

9 California Dental Association

10 University of Minnesota Division of Perontology <http://www1.unm.edu/perio/tobacco/smokeless.html>

11 Massachusetts Department of Health ‘Smokeless Tobacco Advertising Expenditures Before and After the Smokeless Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement’ May 2002

12 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration 2005