

Smokeless Tobacco Fact Sheet

Tobacco Control Program – May 2015

Smokeless tobacco is tobacco that is not burned. The U.S. Surgeon General and the National Cancer Institute have found that smokeless tobacco use is hazardous to health and can lead to nicotine addiction. Nicotine in smokeless tobacco along with other chemicals is absorbed into the bloodstream from tissues in the mouth or nose. Smokeless tobacco contains at least 28 cancer-causing chemicals and causes oral, pancreatic and esophageal cancer¹, and can cause gum disease, tooth decay, and tooth loss.¹

Types of Smokeless Tobacco:

- **Oral (moist) snuff** is a 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. Also called 'dip'.
- **Snus (or pouches)** is a tea-bag like packet of moist snuff tobacco and flavorings, placed between the upper gum and lip. The product design does not require the user to spit, unlike traditional moist snuff.
- **Dissolvable tobacco products** are made of ground tobacco and flavorings, shaped into pellets (orbs), strips, sticks or other forms that the user ingests orally. These products do not require spitting.
- **Looseleaf chewing tobacco** is stripped and processed cigar-type tobacco leaves, loosely packed to form small strips that are placed between the cheek and gums. It is often sold in a foil-lined pouch and 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 tobacco powder that is sniffed into the nostrils. Flavorings may be added during fermentation, and perfumes may be added after grinding.



Tobacco Use in Connecticut

Adults: ²

- Approximately 480,000 or 18.4% of CT adults used some type of tobacco in the past 30 days.
- Smokeless tobacco is predominantly used by men.
- 1.8% of adults use chewing tobacco, snuff or dip.

Youth: ³

- In 2013, 3.1% of middle school and 19.5% of high school students currently used tobacco products, including cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff, dip, pipes, bidis, kreteks, hookahs, and electronic cigarettes.
- 4.9% of high school students use chewing tobacco, snuff or dip.
- Current use of smokeless tobacco among middle school students has decreased, however it has increased among high school students, primarily males.

Tobacco Industry

- As more states implement laws that ban smoking in public places, smokeless tobacco products are being marketed to cigarette smokers as a substitute that can be used in non-smoking settings.
- Although there have been promotions that switching to smokeless products is a good way to quit smoking, there is no evidence that smokeless tobacco products can actually help smokers quit.

For Further Information

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Key Points:

- Adolescent smokeless tobacco users are more likely than non- users to become adult cigarette smokers.⁴
- 3.5% of people (about 9 million people) aged 12 and older in the US use smokeless tobacco.⁵
- Even after the tobacco is removed from the mouth, nicotine continues to be absorbed into the bloodstream, and the nicotine stays in the blood longer for users of smokeless tobacco than for smokers.⁶
- The amount of nicotine users get from smokeless tobacco can be three to four times higher than the nicotine from smoking cigarettes.⁷

References

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