

Chewing "Spit" Tobacco (Smoking and Tobacco Cessation)

Overview

Mark Twain once said, "Quitting smoking is easy. I've done it a thousand times."

Quitting tobacco is difficult because all forms of it—cigarettes, cigars and spit (chewing) tobacco—contain nicotine and nicotine is the agent in tobacco that's capable of causing addiction or dependence. However, you can quit once and for all. The reasons for quitting are simple: You'll lower the chances of having a heart attack, stroke or cancer, including [oral cancer](#). A smoke-free environment is healthier for those around you. If you're pregnant, you'll improve your chances of having a healthy baby. And, the money spent on tobacco can be used on other things.

Check out the Frequently Asked Questions and Additional Resources section below for free materials and information to help you quit using tobacco and make the transition to a healthier lifestyle.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

- **What effects can smoking have on my oral health?**
 - Oral Cancer
 - Periodontal (gum) disease—a leading cause of tooth loss and sensitivity
 - Delayed healing after a tooth extraction or other oral surgery
 - Few options for some kinds of dental care (smokers can be poor candidates for particular treatments such as implants)
 - Bad breath
 - Stained teeth and tongue
 - Diminished sense of taste and smell
- **What effects can smokeless tobacco have on my oral health?**
 - Like cigarettes, smokeless tobacco products contain a variety of toxins associated with cancer. At least 28 cancer-causing chemicals have been identified in smokeless tobacco products. Smokeless tobacco is known to cause cancers of the mouth, lip, tongue, and pancreas. Users also may be at risk for cancer of the voice box, esophagus, colon and bladder, because they swallow some of the toxins in the juice created by using smokeless tobacco.
 - Smokeless tobacco can irritate your gum tissue, causing periodontal (gum) disease. Sugar is often added to enhance the flavor of smokeless tobacco, increasing the risk for tooth decay. Smokeless tobacco also typically contains sand and grit, which can wear down your teeth.

- **Are cigars a safe alternative to cigarettes?**
 - Cigars are not a safe alternative to cigarettes. Even if you do not inhale cigar smoke, you are still at risk for oral and pharyngeal (throat) cancers. Like cigarette smokers, cigar smokers are at increased risk for periodontal (gum) disease, a leading cause of tooth loss. In addition to the health risks, cigar smoke, like cigarette smoke can cause staining of the teeth and tongue as well as bad breath.

- **How can tobacco cause periodontal (gum) disease?**
 - Smoking may be responsible for almost 75% of periodontal diseases among adults. Tobacco products damage your gum tissue by affecting the attachment of bone and soft tissue to your teeth. An example of the effect is receding gums. A receding gum line exposes the tooth roots and increases your risk of developing a sensitivity to hot and cold, or tooth decay in these unprotected areas.

- **What are some signs of oral cancer?**
 - Signs and symptoms that could indicate oral cancer include:
 - any sign of irritation, like tenderness, burning or a sore that will not heal;
 - pain, tenderness or numbness anywhere in the mouth or lips;
 - development of a lump, or a leathery, wrinkled or bumpy patch inside your mouth; color changes to your oral soft tissues (gray, red or white spots or patches), rather than a healthy pink color;
 - difficulty chewing, swallowing, speaking or moving the jaw or tongue;
 - any change in the way your teeth fit together.
 - See your dentist or physician if you notice any of these changes.

- **How do I quit using tobacco?**
 - Set a date to quit and stick to it. Choose a “low stress” time to quit
 - Enlist the support of your family, friends and co-workers.
 - Ask your dentist or physician about nicotine replacement therapy for use in cessation attempts. Using these medicines can double your chances of quitting for good.
 - Remove tobacco and tobacco paraphernalia from your home, office and car.
 - Seek tobacco-free environments to curve your temptations.
 - Exercise. It may make you feel better about yourself and your decision to quit smoking.
 - When you crave a tobacco—exercise the 4 D’s:
 - Delay—craving will pass in 5–10 minutes
 - Drink water—it will help to wash the toxins from your body

- Do something else—distract yourself by being active.
- Deep breathing—deep inhalations and exhalations are relaxing.
- Anticipate problems and have a realistic plan to deal with challenges.
- Call 1-800-QUITNOW or go to www.smokefree.gov Link opens in separate window. Pop-up Blocker may need to be disabled. for help.