

## **FACT SHEET: SPIT TOBACCO KILLS**

**Heavily advertised as safe alternative to smoking, 39% increase in advertising of spit tobacco in 2001 vs. 1999(FTC 2003)**

**United States Tobacco (UST) is hoping to encourage cigarette smokers to switch to chew tobacco (Wall Street Journal, Jan. 22, 2001)**

### **Statistics & Facts on Smokeless Tobacco**

Smokeless tobacco is also believed to contribute to cardiovascular disease and high blood pressure because the nicotine gets into the bloodstream through the lining of the mouth and/or the gastrointestinal tract. And nicotine causes the heart to beat faster and blood pressure to rise. (American Cancer Society, ACS)

Nearly 600,000 females over age 12 in the U.S. use smokeless tobacco. (National Institute of Drug Abuse-an agency of the National Institutes of Health, March 2001)

46.4 percent of current tobacco users who are in middle school live in a household where someone else uses smokeless tobacco. (2002 Ohio Youth Tobacco Survey) ([www.oralcancerfoundation.org/tobacco](http://www.oralcancerfoundation.org/tobacco))

While 77% of American's youth think that smoking is harmful, only 40% believe spit tobacco is harmful. (Center for Disease Control (CDC) Surgeon General's Report)

On average, spit tobacco users have tobacco in their mouths about half of their waking hours. (University of MN/Health Partners Foundation, 2000)

### **Nicotine in Spit Tobacco**

Spit tobacco has 10x's jolt of nicotine of one cigarette.

Smokeless tobacco users absorb two to three times the amount of addictive nicotine as those who smoke cigarettes (National Cancer Institute)

The amount of nicotine in one dip or chew can deliver up to 5x's amount found in one cigarette.

- 1 can snuff=as much nicotine as 4 packs of cigarettes (Mayo Clinic)
- Thirty-minutes of chew gives same nicotine as 3 cigarettes
- A two-can/week dipper gets same nicotine as 1.5 pack-a-day cigarettes
- 8-10 dips per day is same amount of nicotine as 30-40 cigarettes (Spit Tobacco: Does Smokeless Mean harmless, 2001 Mayo Clinic Report)

- Causes measurable increases in heart rate and blood pressure within 5 Minutes.
- Can lead to heart disease and stroke.

Spit tobacco manufacturers manipulate pH. Increased pH=increased rate of nicotine absorption. There are substantial differences in pH and nicotine among 6 common US smokeless tobacco products:

COPENHAGEN SNUFF PH 8.18 FREE NICOTINE 58.74%  
 SKOAL BANDITS STRAIGHT PH 5.52 FREE NICOTINE .31%  
 SKOAL BANDITS WINTERGREEN PH 6.85 FREE NICOTINE 6.37%  
 SKOAL LONG CUT WINTERGREEN PH 7.79 FREE NICOTINE 37.29%  
 KODIAK WINTERGREE PH 8.35 FREE NICOTINE 68.14%  
 HAWKEN WINTERGREEN PH 5.24 FREE NICOTINE .23%

Low nicotine, sweet spit tobacco products are like training wheels. As need for nicotine increases, you graduate to higher nicotine products.

### **SPIT TOBACCO CANCER RISK**

Smokeless tobacco is a known carcinogen. Chewing tobacco contains 28 carcinogens, including tobacco specific nitrosamines. Other cancer causing substances include formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, crotonaldehyde, hydrazine, arsenic, nickel, cadmium, benzopyrene and polonium (gives off radiation) (National Cancer Institute)

**HEAD and NECK CANCER:** Spit tobacco users are 50% more at risk for cancer of the cheek, gums, and inner surface of the lips. (American Cancer Society (ACS))

- Only 1/2 of oral cancer patients live 5 years after diagnosis
- One person dies from oral cancer every hour in the US
- 60% increase in tongue cancer over 3 decades for US adults under age 40

**Leukoplakia**, white patches and oral lesions on the cheeks, gums or tongue, is commonly found present in smokeless tobacco users. Leukoplakia can be an early indicator of oral cancer. About 75% of daily users of smokeless tobacco will get leukoplakia. (ACS)

Smokeless tobacco users increase their risk of cancers of the oral cavity, the throat, the larynx, esophagus, pancreas, stomach, and prostate. (ACS)

**Breast Cancer.** Women who use spit tobacco (snuff) have 8x's the risk. Spit tobacco is particularly popular among Native American Women. (Wake Forest Univ. Baptist Medical Center, Winston-Salem, NC, May 2000)

## **SPIT TOBACCO CESSATION**

For help quitting spit tobacco call 1-800-844-CHEW.

People in a counseling group are about 2x's more likely to quit tobacco use compared to those trying to quit on their own.

A physician can prescribe nicotine substitutes or other pharmaceuticals that can help with withdrawal symptoms and cravings.

70-90% of tobacco users say that difficult and uncomfortable withdrawal symptoms are their main reason for not quitting. (ACS)

Spit tobacco substitute products, i.e. mint chew, are generally considered safe but are not FDA approved.