



# Smokeless Tobacco

## Not a Safe Alternative to Cigarettes

Now that it's been scientifically determined that cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health, the tobacco industry has been reviving snuff and chewing tobacco, two products that had fallen in popularity over the last few decades. There's a widely held myth that smokeless tobacco is a safe alternative to cigarettes, when actually it's just as dangerous as smoking.

### How They Work

Snuff is a cured, ground form of tobacco that can be inhaled or chewed. Dry snuff is inhaled through the nose or placed inside the nostril, while wet snuff is held between the lips or between the cheek and gum. Chewing tobacco is available in several forms, including plugs, twists and loose leaf. In all cases, chemicals from the smokeless tobacco are absorbed into the blood stream through mucous membranes in the mouth. Because the nicotine in snuff and chewing tobacco is released gradually, their effects seem to last longer than those of cigarettes.

### Physical Effects

Since nicotine is an addictive drug, snuff and chewing tobacco users become just as chemically dependent as cigarette smokers. Smokeless products induce a higher blood-nicotine level, which is sustained for longer periods, since users tend to chew over a period of hours. As with cigarettes, snuff and chewing tobacco may cause heart disease and certain kinds of cancer. These products also have dangers of their own, including gum diseases, erosion of teeth and mouth lesions which can develop into cancer.

### Use Increasing

Many cigarette users have switched to smokeless tobacco over the last several years because of the misconception that where there's no smoke, there's no danger. A study by the U.S. Surgeon General's office shows that smokeless tobacco is more popular now than at any time in the last 50 years and that adolescent males are the fastest growing group of users. If you or any of your friends are using smokeless tobacco you may want to quit once you realize the dangers are just as great as smoking cigarettes.

## Nicotine Absorption in 30 Minutes

