



## Fact Sheet on Smokeless Tobacco Products

---

*Smokeless tobacco is a significant health risk and is not a safe alternative to smoking cigarettes.*

### What is smokeless tobacco?

There are two main types of smokeless tobacco: chewing tobacco and snuff.<sup>1</sup>

Chewing tobacco is available in the form of loose leaf, plug or twist. Snuff is finely ground tobacco that can be dry, moist or in the form of sachets like tea bags.<sup>1</sup>

Users of smokeless tobacco usually place the product between their gum and their cheek. They suck on the tobacco and then spit the juices. For this reason, smokeless tobacco is sometimes called *spit tobacco* or *chew tobacco*.

Recently, a new product from Sweden and Norway called snus (pronounced sn-oo-s) has entered the North American market. Snus is similar to chewing tobacco and snuff, however, it is less noticeable because it does not need to be spit.<sup>2</sup>

### Who uses smokeless tobacco?

Men are the primary users of smokeless tobacco. It is estimated that about 1% of males in Canada use the product.<sup>3</sup>

In 2005, 9% of Canadian youth aged 15 – 24 report *ever* having used smokeless tobacco.<sup>4</sup>

Smokeless tobacco is used more often in the prairie region of Canada. Athletes, First Nations people and men who live in rural areas are the main users of smokeless tobacco.<sup>5</sup>

Adolescents who use smokeless tobacco are more likely to become cigarette smokers.<sup>6</sup>

### Health effects of smokeless tobacco.

Smokeless tobacco contains 28 cancer-causing agents (carcinogens).<sup>7</sup>

Men who use smokeless tobacco are more likely to suffer from coronary heart disease (CHD), stroke, and diseases of the respiratory, digestive, and genitourinary systems.<sup>8</sup>

Studies have also shown that smokeless tobacco can increase your risk of oral cancer.<sup>9</sup>

It is also important to remember that smokeless tobacco is addictive because it contains nicotine, a highly addictive substance.<sup>10</sup>

## References

---

- <sup>1</sup>US Federal Trade Commission. Smokeless Tobacco Report for the Years 2002 – 2005. Washington, DC: Federal Trade Commission; 2007. Accessed December 5, 2007 from: <http://www.ftc.gov/reports/tobacco/02-05smokeless0623105.pdf>
- <sup>2</sup> Imperial Tobacco, Canada. SNUS survival guide. See also: Kozlowski LT, O'Connor RJ, Quinio Edwards B. Some practical points on harm reduction: what to tell your lawmaker and what to tell your brother about Swedish snus. *Tobacco Control* 2003;**12**:372-373 Accessed December 16, 2007 from: <http://tobaccocontrol.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/12/4/372>
- <sup>3</sup> Health Canada Website. Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey. Fact Sheets. Accessed December 5, 2007 from: [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/tobac-tabac/research-recherche/stat/ctums-esutc/fs-if/1999/list2\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/tobac-tabac/research-recherche/stat/ctums-esutc/fs-if/1999/list2_e.html)
- <sup>4</sup> Ontario Tobacco Research Unit. OTRU Update October 2006. What Population Surveys Say about Smokeless Tobacco Use. Accessed December 5, 2007 from: [http://www.otru.org/pdf/updates/update\\_oct2006.pdf](http://www.otru.org/pdf/updates/update_oct2006.pdf)
- <sup>5</sup> Health Canada Website. Smokeless Tobacco. Accessed December 5, 2007 from [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/tobac-tabac/body-corps/smokeless-sansfume/index\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/tobac-tabac/body-corps/smokeless-sansfume/index_e.html)
- <sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [Preventing Tobacco Use Among Young People: A Report of the Surgeon General](#). Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 1994. Accessed December 5, 2007 from: [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/sgr\\_1994/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/sgr_1994/index.htm).
- <sup>7</sup> National Cancer Institute. Smokeless Tobacco or Health: An International Perspective. Bethesda, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute; 1992. Accessed: December 5, 2007 from: <http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/tcrb/monographs/2/index.html>.
- <sup>8</sup> Henley SJ, Thun MJ, Connell C, Calle EE. Two large prospective studies of mortality among men who use snuff or chewing tobacco. *Cancer Causes Control* 2005; 16: 347-58. Accessed December 5, 2007 from: [http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?Db=pubmed&Cmd=ShowDetailView&TermToSearch=15953977&ordinalpos=1&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed\\_ResultsPanel.Pubmed\\_RVAAbstractPlus](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?Db=pubmed&Cmd=ShowDetailView&TermToSearch=15953977&ordinalpos=1&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed_ResultsPanel.Pubmed_RVAAbstractPlus)
- <sup>9</sup> Critchley JA, Unal B. Health affects associated with smokeless tobacco. A systematic review. *Thorax* 2003; 58:435-43. Accessed December 5, 2007 from: [http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?db=pubmed&cmd=Retrieve&dopt=AbstractPlus&list\\_uids=12728167&query=hl=7&itool=pubmed\\_docsum](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?db=pubmed&cmd=Retrieve&dopt=AbstractPlus&list_uids=12728167&query=hl=7&itool=pubmed_docsum)
- <sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [The Health Consequences of Using Smokeless Tobacco: A Report of the Advisory Committee to the Surgeon General, 1986](#). Bethesda, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service. NIH Pub. No. 86-2874. Accessed December 10, 2007 from <http://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/NN/B/B/F/C/>