

SMOKELESS TOBACCO/CHEWING TOBACCO TOOLKIT

Key Messages

- Smokeless (spit) tobacco is not a safe alternative to cigarettes.
- Smokeless tobacco is addictive.
- Smokeless tobacco contains over 3,000 chemicals, including at least 28 carcinogens.¹
- The concentrations of the cancer-causing chemicals are much higher than in cigarettes.²
- One pinch of smokeless tobacco held in the mouth for 30 minutes releases as much nicotine as smoking three to four cigarettes.³
- The health consequences of using smokeless tobacco include: permanent gum recession, mouth sores, precancerous lesions in the mouth, and cancers of the mouth and throat.⁴
- Surgery to treat oral cancer is expensive and disfiguring.
- Those diagnosed with oral cancer from 1995-1997 were 62 percent as likely to be alive for another five years as were comparable members of the general population.⁵
- Smokeless tobacco users are more susceptible to heart disease, hypertension and ulcers.⁶
- Bad breath, stained teeth and spitting/drooling are also side effects of using smokeless tobacco.⁷

Products⁸

Snuff:

- *Dry snuff* is usually “sniffed” through the nose and is more common in other countries.
- It is finely ground tobacco similar to a powder consistency
- *Moist snuff*, the form most often used by youth today, is often called “dipping.”
- Moist snuff is sold in small round tins or “pucks.”

¹ National Cancer Institute, “Smokeless Tobacco: Just the Facts!” Cancer Control & Population Services, 1999 <http://dccps.nci.nih.gov/tcrb/less_facts.html>.

² Effect of smokeless tobacco (snus) on smoking and public health in Sweden

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³ National Cancer Institute, “Smokeless Tobacco: Just the Facts!” Cancer Control & Population Services, 1999 <http://dccps.nci.nih.gov/tcrb/less_facts.html>.

⁴ National Cancer Institute, “Smokeless Tobacco: Health and Other Effects” Cancer Control & Population Services, 1999 <http://dccps.nci.nih.gov/tcrb/less_effects.html>.

⁵ Canadian Cancer Society, National Cancer Institute of Canada: Canadian Cancer Statistics 2006

⁶ National Cancer Institute, “Smokeless Tobacco: Health and Other Effects” Cancer Control & Population Services, 1999 <http://dccps.nci.nih.gov/tcrb/less_effects.html>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ National Cancer Institute, <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Tobacco/smokeless>

- A “pinch” is placed between the cheek and gum.
- It is also available in small individual sachets/packets that resemble small tea bags (less messy).

Chewing Tobacco:

- *Loose leaf chew* is the most common – shredded tobacco leaves sold in a pouch.
- *Twist* tobacco consists of dried leaves twisted into ropes.
- *Plug* tobacco is compressed into a small brick and a piece must be cut off.
- Either form can be chewed or sucked.
- Excess tobacco juice and extra saliva builds up in the mouth, and then must be spit out.

Marketing to Youth

- The Tobacco Industry has initiated aggressive marketing campaigns to introduce “cool” brands and “fun” flavours of chew tobacco to appeal to youth.
- Chew and snuff are marketed as an alternative to cigarettes.
- The ads can be seen in magazines geared towards young men and athletes (i.e. *Maxim*, *Stuff*, *FHM*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Rolling Stone*, and trade sport magazines like *America’s Horse*).
- Ads are geared towards youth and young adults promising a free lifestyle.
- Chew is available in youth appealing flavour “blends” including green apple, cherry, berry, peach, vanilla, wintergreen and spearmint.
- Warning labels are a fraction of the size and detail of warning labels on cigarette packaging, thereby implying less harm (see pictures attached).
- *Skoal*, a popular chew brand is available in “pucks” or “tins” or in “logs,” which contain seven (7) tins at a cost of around \$6.00 per tin.
- *Access* is a dry smokeless tobacco product that comes in a plastic container like breath mints with the tobacco in tiny teabag-like packages that the user places in his/her mouth. It comes in mint and cinnamon flavor and is less than \$4.00 package (see pictures attached).
- According to the Northwestern Ontario Student Drug Use Survey, today, 10 per cent of Northwestern Ontario students, grades seven through twelve, use smokeless tobacco (see chart below)⁹.

⁹ Sieswerda LE, Starkes JM, Adlaf EM. Student Drug Use in Northwestern Ontario: Results of the Northwestern Ontario Student Drug Use Survey, 1997 – 2005. Thunder Bay District Health Unit, Thunder Bay, Ontario: 2006.

Harmful Chemicals Found in Smokeless Tobacco

Smokeless tobacco is a mixture of tobacco, sugar, salt, other flavoring agents, abrasives and thousands of chemicals, including 28 *carcinogens*.

Harmful Chemicals¹⁰:

- *Nitrosamines* (potent cancer-causing agents – detected at levels as high as 100 times the level lawfully allowed in food products like bacon and beer)
- *Formaldehyde* (a favorite preservative of dead things in biology class)
- *Cadmium* (used in car batteries)
- *Polonium 210* (nuclear waste – radioactive agent)
- *Arsenic* (rat poison)
- *Lead* (the poisonous kind – banned from paint products)
- *Cyanide* (another poison - used in the gas chamber)
- *Benzene* (toxic liquid sometimes used as motor fuel additive – carcinogenic)
- + Many more....

Smokeless Tobacco and the Law

- Smokeless tobacco, like cigarettes, cannot be sold to youth under the age of 19 in Ontario.¹¹
- Smokeless tobacco packaging needs to carry one of four text warnings and list three constituents: lead, nicotine, and nitrosamines.¹²

Advertising Smokeless Tobacco

- Smokeless tobacco falls under the same advertising restrictions as cigarettes in Canada.¹³
- U.S. and international magazines imported to Canada, however, often contain advertising for smokeless tobacco products, exposing Canadians to the promotion of this dangerous product (see attached examples).

¹⁰ National Cancer Institute < <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Tobacco/smokeless>>

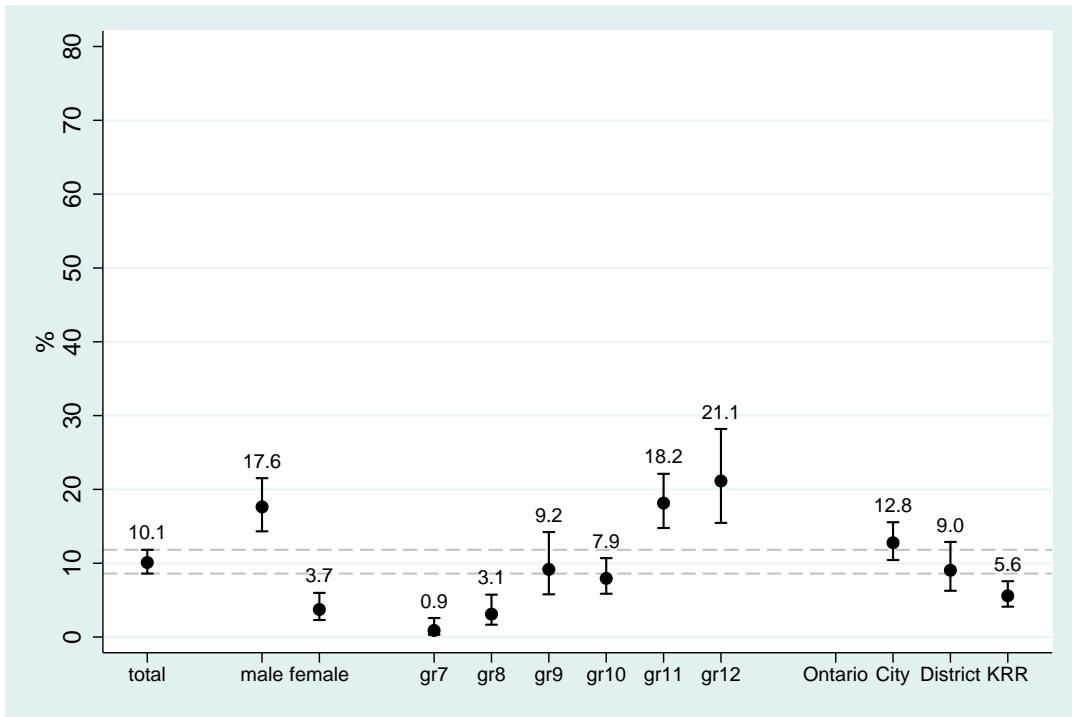
¹¹ Government of Ontario, "Smoke-Free Ontario Act" < http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/DBLaws/Statutes/English/94t10_e.htm>.

¹² Health Canada, "Graphic Health Warnings" [Healthy Living](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/tobac-tabac/legislation/label-etiquette/graph/index_e.html), 1 May 2005 <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/tobac-tabac/legislation/label-etiquette/graph/index_e.html>.

¹³ Government of Canada, "The Tobacco Act" [Department of Justice](http://www.justice.gc.ca/en/T-11.5/106293.html), 25 April 1997 <<http://www.justice.gc.ca/en/T-11.5/106293.html>>.

Smokeless Tobacco (Snuff) Use Percentage of students use by sex, grade, and region Source: Northwestn Ontario Student Drug Use Survey 2005)

Year		2005
(N)		(1374)
Total		10.1
(95% CI)		(8.6, 11.8)
Sex	Male	17.6
		(14.3, 21.5)
	Female	3.7
		(2.3, 6.0)
Grade	Grade 7	0.9
		(0.3, 2.6)
	Grade 8	3.1
		(1.7, 5.7)
	Grade 9	9.2
		(5.8, 14.2)
	Grade 10	7.9
		(5.9, 10.7)
	Grade 11	18.2
		(14.8, 22.1)
	Grade 12	21.1
		(15.5, 28.2)
Region	All Ontario	--
	City of Thunder Bay	12.8
		(10.4, 15.6)
	District of Thunder Bay	9.0
		(6.3, 12.9)
	Kenora-Rainy River	5.6
		(4.1, 7.6)



Past year smokeless tobacco (snuff) use by sex, grade, and region, with 95% confidence intervals, 2005.

Sieswerda, Lee, Jim Starkes, and Edward Adlaf. Northwestern Ontario Student Drug Use Survey. 1997-2005. Ontario. Available Online: www.nwhu.on.ca/download.php?file=274