



INFORMATION REGARDING THE USE OF SMOKELESS TOBACCO

The use of smokeless tobacco has been steadily increasing over the past decade. Smokeless tobacco use is promoted as a safe alternative to cigarette smoking and is advertised as a masculine, attractive, and socially acceptable practice. In reality, smokeless tobacco increases the risk of oral cancer and other health problems. The following is a list of facts adopted from the American Cancer Society's pamphlet entitled, *Smokeless Tobacco - A Medical Perspective*:

- Tobacco use is a known cause of cancer. Smokeless tobacco is not a safe substitute for cigarettes.
- Estimates made from a 1992, 1993 national survey indicate that approximately 3.7 million adults are current users of smokeless tobacco. Use is increasing, especially among young males.
- Unburned tobacco contains the carcinogenic nitrosamines NNN and NNK, which have tumor-initiating properties in animals. Snuff contains up to 135mg/kg of NNN and up to 14mg/kg of NNK.
- The Third National Cancer Survey found that men who use smokeless tobacco incurred a 3.9-fold increased risk of oral cancer. Another study showed that use of smokeless tobacco by southern women resulted in roughly a 4-fold increase in oral cancer; those who reported long term use (>50 years) had approximately a 50-fold increased risk of oral cancer.
- Gingival (gum) recession is a common result of smokeless tobacco use. The role of smokeless tobacco in the development and progression of gingivitis and periodontitis has not been confirmed.
- Use of smokeless tobacco may possibly lead to deleterious in utero effects: Heavy metals such as lead and cadmium have been found in smokeless tobacco products at levels that could be harmful to a fetus.
- Studies show elevated blood levels of nicotine from smokeless tobacco similar to those produced by cigarettes. One study demonstrated that smokeless tobacco users experienced changes in heart rate and blood pressure similar in magnitude to those experienced by smokers.
- Benign oral lesions may occur after only a few years of smokeless tobacco use.
- Long term health risks are the primary behavioral consequences of regular smokeless tobacco use.

It is out of concern for your dental and overall health that we urge you to discontinue the use of smokeless tobacco. If you have further questions, please feel free to discuss them with your dentist or hygienist.

Wishing you continued dental health,

The ForwardDental Team