



## January 2008 Tobacco Theme Smokeless Does NOT Mean Harmless

### In this Issue:

Spit Blitz  
Smoke-Free Places  
National Non-Smoking Week  
Tobacco Reduction & Cessation Service  
Why Focus on Spit Tobacco?  
What is Spit Tobacco?

What is in Spit Tobacco?  
Health Effects of Spit Tobacco  
Preventing Spit Tobacco Use  
Expose Tobacco Industry Marketing  
Educational Resources

---

### Spit Blitz

Your School Nurse has partnered with AADAC to develop the Spit Blitz Program. The goal of the Spit Blitz is to raise awareness about the risks of spit tobacco use among grade 5 students in the Capital Region. The program includes teacher packages, brief presentations about spit tobacco, interactive games along with a "Skull and Crossbones, Spit Tobacco is Toxic" zipper pull for each grade 5 student. The zipper pull provides an ongoing reminder to students that smokeless tobacco is by no means harmless. For more information about spit or smokeless tobacco see pages 2 & 3.

### Smoke-Free Places (Tobacco Reduction) Amendment Act, 2007

On November 14, 2007, Bill 45, the Smoke-free Places (Tobacco Reduction) Amendment Act, 2007 passed third and final reading.

Once proclaimed, the Act will:

- Prohibit smoking in all public places and workplaces (proposed effective January 1, 2008);
- Ban tobacco displays, promotions and advertising in retail outlets (proposed effective July 1, 2008); and
- Remove tobacco sales from pharmacies, health care facilities and post-secondary campuses.

### National Non-Smoking Week

January 20<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup>

Weedless Wednesday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>

**Taking My Life Back from Tobacco**

The date of National Non-Smoking Week is Jan 20-26<sup>th</sup>. The goal of the week is to draw attention to the harm caused by tobacco use and to encourage Canadians to take action. Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and premature death in Canada. It is responsible for more than 47,000 deaths every year. Tobacco kills three times more Canadians each year than alcohol, AIDS, illegal drugs, car accidents, suicide, and murder - all combined!

**The Theme of National Non-Smoking Week is Taking My Life Back from Tobacco**

# Health Talk

---

## **Tobacco Reduction and Cessation Services in the Capital Region**

Quitting smoking can be very difficult. Smoking is both an addiction and a habit. That's why on average, it can take 6 to 7 quit attempts before a smoker is successful. Tobacco reduction services can help smokers to develop an individualized quit plan that will work for them. To learn more about free tobacco cessation services in Capital region, go to [www.capitalhealth.ca/quitsmoking](http://www.capitalhealth.ca/quitsmoking) or call the Smoker's Help Line 1-866-332-2322.

## **Why Focus on Spit Tobacco?**

- Evidence suggests that spit tobacco use is a concern in children and youth. A study by AADAC in 2002 found that 15% of male youth had used spit tobacco at least once in the past year.
- Spit tobacco use causes serious health problems.
- Spit tobacco is made in a variety of candy-like flavors such as cherry, peach, and mint that are appealing to children. It is attractively displayed (often by the candy counter) in most retail stores.
- Spit tobacco use is more common among males, athletes, rural males and aboriginal people.
- Some studies show that spit tobacco use can begin in children at a young age.

## **What is Spit Tobacco?**

Spit tobacco is also known as spit, chew, snuff and smokeless tobacco. Despite its fancy packaging and flavouring it is still tobacco and it is still harmful. People use it by placing a small amount of tobacco ("pinch" or "dip") inside their mouths. This is left in place for an average of 30 minutes. Saliva mixes with the tobacco and produces brownish colored tobacco juices that the person either swallows or spits out. Some of the newer oral tobacco products such as "Bandits" or Snuff are packaged in small bags. This makes use easier and cleaner and is more appealing to young people, especially females. These products are now referred to as smokeless tobacco as they do not stimulate the mouth to produce large amounts of saliva. Nicotine is released into the bloodstream through the mucous membranes in the mouth. For more information ask your school nurse or visit [www.aadac.com](http://www.aadac.com).

## **What is in Spit Tobacco?**

- Spit Tobacco is a mixture of tobacco, sugar, flavourings, and salt.
- It contains over 3000 chemicals.
- As many as twenty-eight of the chemicals in spit tobacco are known to cause cancer. Some of these chemicals include tobacco-specific N-nitrosamines, formaldehyde (embalming fluid), arsenic (rat poison), nickel, cadmium (chemical in car batteries and polonium 210 (nuclear waste)).
- Newer products such as duMaurier Snuff have less cancer-causing chemicals, but they are by no means harmless.

## **Health Effects of Spit Tobacco**

- **Addiction:** Spit tobacco can be addictive. Depending on the brand, a pinch of spit tobacco (single use) contains the same amount of nicotine as 1 to 4 cigarettes.
- **Gum and Tooth Disease:** This includes staining of the teeth, gum recession, tooth abrasion, gum and tooth disease, yellowing of the teeth and chronic bad breath.
- **Changes in the Mouth:** Leukoplakia or white leathery pre-cancerous patches often develop where the tobacco is held in the mouth.
- **Heart and Circulatory Disease:** Nicotine causes increased heart rate and blood pressure and makes the blood vessels smaller, reducing circulation.
- **Cancers:** Spit tobacco use may cause oral cancer (e.g. tongue, throat, mouth) and increases the risk of developing other cancers.
- **Appearance:** Spit tobacco can cause a black hairy tongue, bad breath, stained teeth and ugly brown stains on clothing.
- **Sports Performance:** Studies show that spit tobacco does not improve reaction time.

# Health Talk

---

## Preventing Spit Tobacco Use

You can make a difference by spending a few minutes making sure children “Know Spit Tobacco”.

## Effective Approaches

Help children and youth see the negative aspects of spit tobacco use. Recent studies indicate that when youth have a negative attitude towards tobacco they are less likely to experiment.

## Make it Relevant

Focus on some of the short term physical effects that are important to youth such as:

- Discoloured, brown-stained teeth
- Bad breath
- Hairy tongue
- Tooth decay from the sugars in spit tobacco
- Receding gums
- Stained clothing
- Facial deformities suffered by oral cancer victims

## Be Concrete

- Discuss the deadly chemicals like formaldehyde (embalming fluid) or arsenic (rat poison) that spit tobacco users will be repeatedly putting in their mouths.
- Emphasize the high nicotine content in spit tobacco. Not only does one pinch have the same amount of nicotine as 3 to 4 cigarettes, it is left in the mouth for long periods of time.
- Emphasize that spit tobacco does not improve athletic performance. In fact, some of the effects of nicotine, such as short-term dizziness, may reduce potential.

## Expose Tobacco Industry Marketing

Review the ways that tobacco companies make spit tobacco more appealing to youth such as:

- Adding sugar and salt to mask the harsh taste of tobacco
- Creating a variety of candy-like flavours like cherry, peach and mint
- Displaying the attractive tins beside the candy at the cash register
- Developing single-use pouches that make the product easier and cleaner to use
- Calling the product smokeless tobacco, giving illusion that because no smoke is involved, it is not harmful.

## Educational Resources

Know Spit Tobacco Teaching Kit \*

This interactive teaching kit graphically shows some of the ingredients in spit tobacco, the effects of spit tobacco use and tobacco company marketing strategies. It also includes a short quiz game. It can be used as a stand alone resource or combined with any of the following resources.

Spit Tobacco Display

A table top display that provides information about spit tobacco including the contents, effects of spit tobacco use and reasons to be spit tobacco-free.

Mr. Gross Mouth

A model of the mouth concretely demonstrates the effects of spit tobacco use and smoking. Call AADAC at (780)644-3639 or Capital Health at (780)735-3036.

Daily Announcements

*The 2008 Daily Tobacco Reduction Announcements focus on spit tobacco.*

## Health Talk

---

### **Pamphlets:**

- What's Really in Spit Tobacco? (AADAC)

For more information talk to your school nurse or call other Tobacco Reduction Programs

### **Teaming Up for Tobacco-Free Kids**

[www.tobaccostinks.com](http://www.tobaccostinks.com)

Teaming Up is a free tobacco prevention program for grades 4, 5 and 6. It includes a teacher resource kit containing 9 Alberta Learning approved lesson plans. In addition, there is a special program for grade 6 students consisting of a free role model presentation, T-shirts, and poster contest. For more information, contact Colleen Annicchiarico at AADAC Youth Services by phone at (780) 644-3641 or via email at [ColleenAnnicchiarico@aadac.gov.ca](mailto:ColleenAnnicchiarico@aadac.gov.ca).

### **Kic the Nic (Tobacco Cessation Program for Teens)**

Kic the Nic is an AADAC sponsored tobacco-cessation program developed especially for teens. The 10-week group program includes facilitator training, quit kits and cessation materials. For more information, contact Denise Salanski-Cleveland by phone at (780)644-3639 or via email at [DeniseSalanski-Cleveland@aadac.gov.ca](mailto:DeniseSalanski-Cleveland@aadac.gov.ca).