# SMOKELESS TOBALLO AND SPORTS A Dangerous Game

A lot of famous athletes, especially baseball players, have been known to use smokeless tobacco products. Every once in a while you'll see a baseball player in the bullpen chewing away and spitting into the dirt. It's gross to watch, but even worse, it makes some people feel that smokeless tobacco is safe. After all, if smokeless tobacco is so dangerous, why would pro athletes use it?

The thing is, many baseball players have gotten very sick and even died from their smokeless tobacco use:

- Babe Ruth, arguably the greatest baseball player ever, died from cancer caused by chewing tobacco. He was only 52 years old.
- Bill Tuttle played baseball for the Detroit Tigers and the Minnesota Twins. He died a few years after developing a tumor that protruded through the skin on the side of his mouth. He had to have his teeth and parts of his mouth removed before losing his struggle with cancer.
- Tony Gwynne, a recent Hall of Famer and former baseball player for the San Diego Padres, developed a tumor in his salivary glands and had surgery to remove the tumors in his salivary glands as well as in his lymph nodes. The surgery left his face partially paralyzed, making it impossible for him to smile. Although he was temporarily thought to be cancer-free, Gwynne passed away in 2014.

## SAYING "NO" TO SMOKELESS TOBACCO

You know that dip, snuff and snus are bad for you, but what do you do when someone keeps offering you a chew?

Try one of these:

- "Are you serious? That stuff gives you cancer."
- "You're kidding, right? I don't want bad breath all day."
- "That stuff grosses me out. No thanks."

### THINK YOU KNOW SMOKELESS TOBACCO?

Test your knowledge! Answer the questions below to prove how much you know about the risks of smokeless tobacco.

- 1. Smokeless tobacco products do not contain any nicotine.
  - A. True

- B. False
- 2. Smokeless tobacco contains many of the same cancer-causing chemicals as cigarettes.
  - A. True

- B. False
- 3. You can't die from using smokeless tobacco products.
  - A. True

- B. False
- 4. Dopamine is the addictive chemical inside smokeless tobacco.
  - A. True

- B. False
- 5. Your teeth can fall out if you use smokeless tobacco products.
  - A. True

B. False

# SMOKELESS TOBACCO



Answers: 1. False 2. True 3. False 4. False 5. True

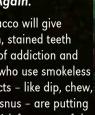
#### STay safe series

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A NASTY HABIT

#### NOT AN ALTERNATIVE Think Smokeless Tobacco is Safe? Think Again.

Smokeless tobacco will give you bad breath, stained teeth and a lifetime of addiction and illness. People who use smokeless tobacco products - like dip, chew, spit, snuff and snus - are putting



themselves at risk for many of the same health issues as people who smoke cigarettes.

Many users think smokeless tobacco products are "safe" alternatives to cigarettes. That's dead wrong: smokeless tobacco products contain just as many cancer-causing chemicals as cigarettes do; including formaldehyde, arsenic, nickel and nitrosamines (TSNAs).

#### PICK YOUR POISON: THE TYPES OF SMOKELESS TOBACCO

Unlike cigarettes and cigars, smokeless tobacco products don't need to be burned and inhaled. Instead, smokeless tobacco products are directly inserted into the mouth, sniffed or inhaled. Smokeless tobacco products contain a high level of nicotine that's the chemical that gets tobacco users hooked.

There are three types of smokeless tobacco products: Chewing/ Spit tobacco is the most common form of smokeless tobacco. It's usually sold in pouches or tins and sometimes it's flavored. It is inserted in the lip and the juices are spit out. Snuff is dried, ground tobacco that is sniffed or inhaled. Snus (pronounced "snooze") come in a pouch and it does not require the user to spit out the juices.

#### HOOKED: NICOTINE, DOPAMINE AND YOUR BRAIN

When you use a tobacco product, nicotine enters your bloodstream and immediately attaches onto your brain's neurotransmitters. These transmitters are like information highways, passing data from your brain to other parts of your body. Nicotine causes your brain to release dopamine, a chemical that controls your feelings of joy and excitement.

Tobacco users become addicted to this feeling. They keep using tobacco so their brain keeps producing dopamine. Eventually they have to use more and more tobacco to feel good. Once you "need" nicotine to feel normal, you're addicted.

#### HELLO, HALITOSIS

Smokeless Tobacco's Short-term Effects

Both snuff and chewing tobacco products contain more than twice the nicotine as cigarettes. Because chew and dip contain such high levels of nicotine, they're twice as addictive as cigarettes. Many first-time users get hooked right away. You've probably heard stories about how hard it is to guit smoking, right? Smokeless tobacco is just as hard to guit - maybe even harder.

Bottom line, smokeless tobacco is seriously habit-forming, and it's a nasty habit. Smokeless tobacco products stain your teeth, turning them yellow and brown. That's not all. When you use dip, snuff, or snus your mouth smells as bad as it looks. Most smokeless tobacco users suffer from severe halitosis (that's a scientific way to say "bad breath").

Still think smokeless tobacco is a good alternative to cigarettes? You might change your mind when you look in the mirror.

#### SPITTING ON YOUR LIFE

Smokeless Tobacco's Long-term Effects

Think bad breath and brown teeth are scary? It gets worse. The long-term effects of smokeless tobacco include:

- · Gum disease and tooth loss
- Increased risk for several types of cancer; including oral cancer, throat cancer and pancreatic cancer
- Increased risk of heart disease
- · Increased risk of stroke

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimate that about 30,000 Americans are diagnosed with throat and mouth cancer every vegr. About 8.000 of those people don't survive.

**Smokeless** tobacco can kill you. It's not safe. Don't believe anyone who tells you it is.



## AN ATHLETE DYING YOUNG

**Brett's Story** 

18-year-old Brett was a star athlete at his high school in Kansas. He helped his baseball team win back-to-back championship titles for three years in a row. He was set to graduate soon and the chance for a full scholarship looked bright. All he had to do to get that scholarship was to shine his senior year. No problem.



Unfortunately, Brett made a huge mistake over the summer. He had started smoking and he was having a hard time keeping up with the rest of his team when they started training. He knew he had to guit, but he felt so moody and bad when he didn't have a cigarette. So his friend Alan introduced him to chewing tobacco. Chew would keep him feeling good, Alan explained, but it wouldn't hurt his lungs.

A few months later, Brett was back in top form. The season had started and he was performing well. The problem, though, was that he felt a pain in the side of his mouth - the same area he placed his chewing tobacco. He let it slide for a while, thinking it was a toothache or a sore, but soon Brett could feel a growth in his cheek. He was afraid to say anything, so he ignored it.

It wasn't until the cancerous tumor started protruding through his skin that he began to panic.

Brett's doctors worked with him for eight long weeks, exposing him to high doses of radiation throughout. They removed parts of his cheek and gums to contain the cancer. Luckily the doctors were able to save Brett's life, but his body had become weak and frail. He was pale and dejected and his family was completely broke from paying the high hospital bills not covered by their insurance.

Brett's chances of becoming a baseball star had ended just as they were beginning.