MARCUS'S STORY

Daily Dose of Harsh Chemicals

Marcus thought he had found a clean alternative. Busy with long hours at work and trying to cut back on vaping, a colleague handed him a small white pouch, claiming it was just flavored nicotine with no smoke or vapor. At first, Marcus liked the convenience—he could use it at his desk without anyone noticing, getting a quick buzz of alertness. But over time things changed: the cans added up, he needed a pouch in his lip constantly, and when he tried to go a day without them, he felt irritable, anxious, and plagued by dull headaches. What started as a discreet "productivity boost" turned into a stubborn daily addiction. He later learned that what he thought was a harmless lifestyle habit delivered heavy doses of addictive chemicals directly into his system.

Marcus's story illustrates how quickly a product marketed as clean and modern can create a powerful cycle of dependence.

HOW TO GET HELP

- **National Resources:** If you are trying to quit nicotine and need support, text "QUIT" to 38340 or visit Smokefree.gov for free, confidential guidance and tools.
- **Healthcare Guidance:** Talk with your doctor, a school counselor, or a youth shelter staff member about safe cessation strategies, nicotine replacement options, or behavioral support.
- **Immediate Support:** Reach out to local health clinics or wellness hotlines if you experience severe withdrawal symptoms, acute poisoning, or cardiovascular distress from overuse.

Test Your Knowledge!

1. Nicotine pouches contain raw shredded tobacco leaves inside each bag.
   a. True b. False
2. Nicotine pouches can cause side effects such as gum irritation, increased heart rate, and strong addiction.
   a. True b. False
3. All nicotine pouches are fully approved by the FDA as safe medical treatments to quit smoking.
   a. True b. False
4. Long-term use of nicotine products can lead to chemical tolerance and withdrawal symptoms when stopping.
   a. True b. False
5. Nicotine is an addictive chemical that places stress on your cardiovascular and nervous systems.
   a. True b. False

Answers: 1.B 2..A 3.B 4.A 5.A

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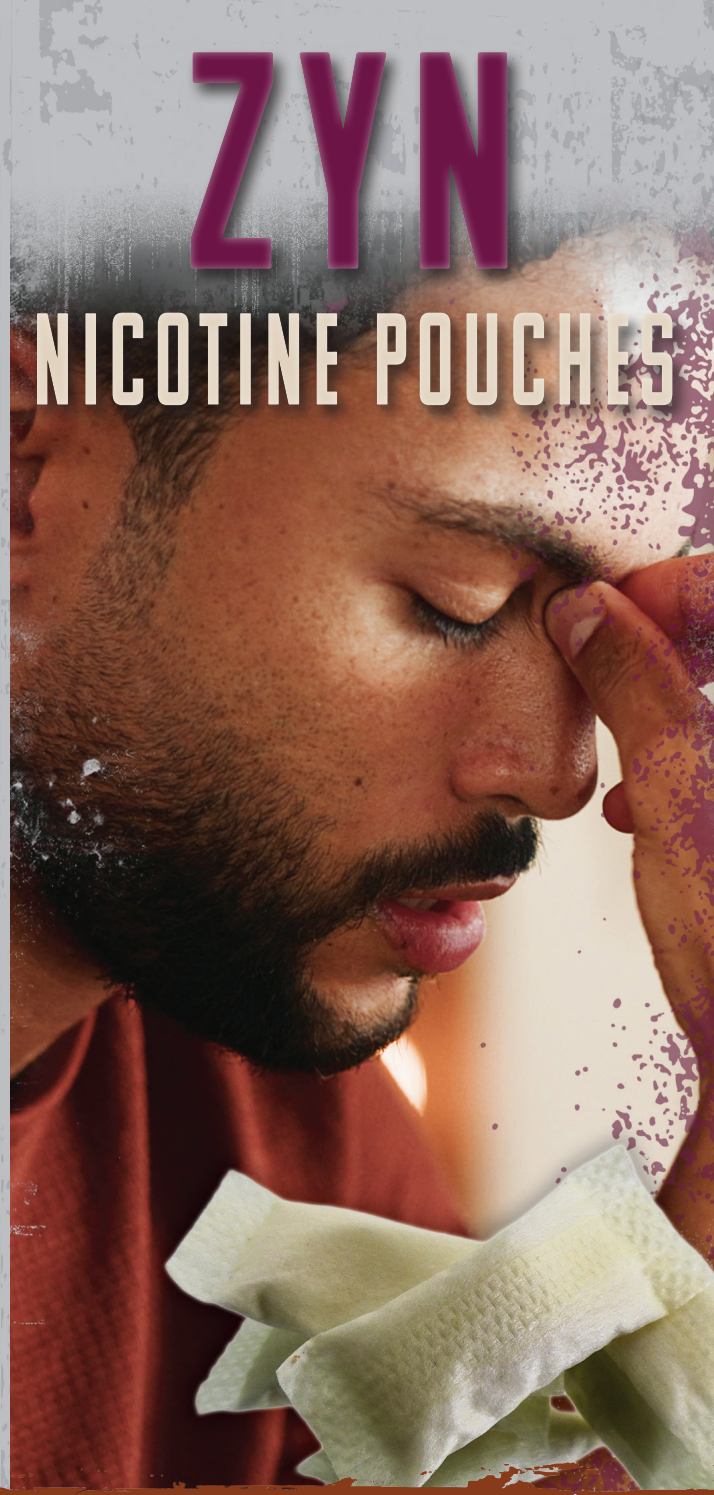
ZYN

NICOTINE POUCHES



Discreet Dependence

What are NICOTINE POUCHES?

Nicotine pouches, often known by popular brand names like Zyn, are small pre-portioned pouches containing extracted nicotine, fillers, flavorings, and sweeteners, but no actual tobacco leaf.

- In low amounts, nicotine typically acts like a stimulant (increased heart rate, alertness); in higher or sustained amounts, it leads to rapid dependence and cardiovascular strain.
- In the United States, nicotine pouches are not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as safe cessation devices or dietary supplements.
- Many flavored products are sold commercially in common places where youth and young adults have easy access (online, gas stations, convenience stores), featuring appealing marketing with variable nicotine strengths.
- A particularly concerning aspect is how rapidly high concentrations of nicotine are absorbed into the bloodstream through the oral mucosa.

Why this matters: Because nicotine pouches are discreet, flavored, and "tobacco-less," they pose significant risks—especially when you assume "smoke-free" means "harmless."

How Do They Work?

- The primary active ingredient is pharmaceutical-grade nicotine extracted from tobacco plants, which quickly binds to receptors in the brain and stimulates central nervous, dopamine, and cardiovascular systems.
- In lower amounts, pouches may produce mild stimulant effects (focus, energy); in frequent amounts, they drive severe chemical dependency and tolerance.
- Because absorption depends on your individual physiology and pouch strength (such as 3mg or 6mg options), the physical impact can vary greatly from person to person.
- Chronic use leads to chemical tolerance (needing more frequent use to feel normal) and strong physical dependence, making it hard to stop without experiencing withdrawal.

SHORT-TERM Effects

At lower exposure: increased heart rate, blood pressure, and alertness.

At higher exposure: dizziness, headaches, nausea, upset stomach, and throat irritation. Other reported effects: hiccups, sore mouth, dry lips, excessive salivation, and localized gum irritation where the pouch rests.

Other reported effects: hiccups, sore mouth, dry lips, excessive salivation, and localized gum irritation where the pouch rests.

Serious immediate risks include: acute nicotine poisoning from accidental ingestion or overuse, severe spikes in blood pressure, and heart palpitations.

Flavored and high-potency formulations increase the risk of rapid nicotine spikes, even when you believe a tobacco-free product is gentle.

LONG-TERM Effects

When use continues for months or years, the following may occur:

- **Tolerance:** needing higher or more frequent doses to achieve the same sensation.
- **Dependence:** being unable to stop without experiencing intense cravings and withdrawal.
- **Oral health issues:** gum recession, localized tissue damage, enamel wear, and chronic mouth irritation.
- **Cardiovascular issues:** sustained high blood pressure, increased resting heart rate, and added stress on blood vessels.
- **Risk of cross-use:** because nicotine alters brain chemistry, regular use can act as a gateway to heavier tobacco or nicotine products.

Withdrawals

Stopping heavy use of nicotine pouches—especially after prolonged high-frequency dosing—can produce uncomfortable withdrawal symptoms like those seen with other nicotine products:

- Intense cravings for nicotine
- Irritability, anxiety, and mood swings
- Difficulty concentrating and restlessness
- Headaches, fatigue, and increased appetite
- Sleep disturbances and insomnia

Because nicotine is heavily addictive, withdrawal severity varies among users and depends on daily dose frequency, strength, and individual physiology. Clinical reports highlight the challenges of breaking nicotine dependence and the value of medical support.

What Do They Do?

In short:

- Nicotine pouches are not safe wellness tools or harmless breath mints; they deliver concentrated, addictive chemicals.
- The evidence for health benefits is strictly limited; health agencies emphasize that non-users should never start using nicotine in any form.
- Many marketers and peers claim pouches are a clean way to handle stress or replace smoking; while they eliminate certain tobacco-leaf toxins, they still carry substantial addiction and cardiovascular risks.
- Because of variable absorption, high chemical potency, and cardiovascular strain, nicotine pouches can lead to persistent health problems including high blood pressure, oral irritation, and chemical dependency.

If you're using nicotine pouches or considering them, including for stress relief or substituting other habits, talk with a healthcare provider. Because the market encourages casual use, and because data shows clear risks of addiction and body strain, this is not a harmless lifestyle accessory.