

## Definitions

- The two most popular forms of smokeless tobacco available in the United States (U.S.) are snuff and chewing tobacco. More recently, a product popular in Sweden called snus has been introduced in the U.S.
  - o Snuff is finely ground tobacco packaged in cans or pouches, which can be sold dry (powdered form that is sniffed, also called “scotch”) or moist (placed between the lower lip or cheek and gum), and is sometimes used in teabag-like pouches.
  - o Chewing tobacco (“chew”) is available in loose leaves, plugs, or twists of tobacco, and is placed between the cheek and gum or teeth.
  - o Snus is moist snuff usually packaged in small pouches and often flavored, originally from Sweden, and does not produce excess saliva like other forms of smokeless tobacco, making it “spitless.”
- Betel quid (“gutka”) is a dried tobacco paste including areca nuts, catechu and scent or flavoring, from India, Africa and Asia.

## National Prevalence and Trends - Youth

- In the United States, 2.6% of youth in middle school and 6.1% of youth in high school use smokeless tobacco.<sup>1</sup>
- Adolescents who use smokeless tobacco are more likely to become cigarette smokers.<sup>2,3</sup>
- Use of smokeless tobacco is higher among males in middle school (4.1%) and high school (11%) than females in middle school (1.2%) and high school (1.5%).<sup>1</sup>
- Smokeless tobacco use increased for 12th-grade males from 1986 until the early 1990s, but subsequently declined until the early 2000s.<sup>4</sup>
- While overall usage levels of smokeless tobacco were stable between 2002 and 2007, certain subpopulations experienced increases. Chief among those were increases among boys aged 12-17, moving from 3.4% in 2002 to 4.4% in 2007.<sup>5</sup>
- Each year, there are over one million new smokeless tobacco users.<sup>5</sup>
- In 2007, three quarters of new smokeless tobacco users were male, and more than half (53%) were under age 18 when they first used smokeless tobacco.<sup>5</sup>

## National Prevalence and Trends - Adult

- In 2008, 3.5%, or 8.6 million Americans ages 12 and older, used smokeless tobacco products.<sup>6</sup>
- In 2008, among adults aged 26 or older, 3.3% were current smokeless tobacco users. Among young adults aged 18 to 25, the rate was 5.4% percent.<sup>6</sup>
- Smokeless tobacco use among men declined slowly between 1987 and 2000 with the largest declines among those aged 18 to 24 years or 65 years and older, Blacks, residents of the South, and persons in more rural areas.<sup>4</sup>

## Sales and Revenue

- Revenues from smokeless tobacco sales reached \$2.593 billion in 2005.<sup>7</sup>
- Since 1987, advertising and promotion expenditures have increased most years, reaching \$308.46 million in 2006.<sup>7</sup>
- In 2005, smokeless tobacco companies spent the largest amount of their advertising and promotional budgets on price discounts.<sup>7</sup>
- Between 2002 and 2006, sales of moist snuff continued to increase while sales of all other smokeless tobacco products fell. 77.4 million pounds of moist snuff were sold in 2006, exceeding the combined sales of all other kinds of smokeless tobacco, and representing 85.1% of total smokeless tobacco sales.<sup>7</sup>
- In 2006, the five largest ST manufacturers spent \$354.1 million on ST advertising and promotion, an increase of 41.2% from the year before, and the most ever spent in the history of the Federal Trade Commission's reporting (i.e., since 1985).<sup>8</sup>

## Health Effects

- Smokeless tobacco contains 28 carcinogens, or cancer causing agents.<sup>9</sup>
- Smokeless tobacco is addictive and is strongly associated with adverse effects on both oral and systemic health.<sup>9</sup>
- Smokeless tobacco is associated with an increased risk of oral cancer, particularly for the tissues that come in contact with tobacco.<sup>10</sup>
- Long-term smokeless tobacco users may be nearly fifty times more likely to have cancers of the cheek and gum than non-users.<sup>10</sup>
- Using smokeless tobacco is also associated with gingivitis, dental caries, abrasion, and staining.<sup>9</sup>
- Studies on the negative health effects of snuff use are limited, but studies have demonstrated that those who use snuff have an elevated risk of fatal stroke as compared with those who do not use snuff,<sup>11</sup> and snuff use is associated with moderate increases in the risk of hypertension (high blood pressure).<sup>12</sup>
- An average of 4.5mg of nicotine are absorbed from 7.9g of chewing tobacco and 3.6mg of nicotine are absorbed from 2.5g moist snuff, compared with only 1mg of nicotine per cigarette.<sup>9</sup>
- Dual use of smokeless tobacco and cigarettes (or “polytobacco” use) is more common among young adult and adolescent male smokers than among their older counterparts. Dual use has important public health implications, as it may slow the decline in smoking rates or perpetuate nicotine dependence, and polytobacco use could increase health risks above that of single product use.<sup>13, 14</sup>

## Snus

- “Snus” is a Swedish term for oral moist snuff which contains ground tobacco, water, salt, humectants, and flavorings.<sup>15</sup>
- Used in Sweden for hundreds of years, snus comes in two forms: loose and sealed in pouches.<sup>15, 16</sup> Snus is lower in tobacco specific nitrosamines than traditional smokeless tobacco, and doesn’t require spitting.
- The cigarette industry has recently made an entry into the smokeless tobacco market in the US, selling smokeless products under popular cigarette brand names. Marlboro snus went national in March 2010, as did Camel snus in 2009.<sup>16,13</sup>
- Because it is a relatively new product, use of snus in the United States is currently unknown at the population level. A survey of Indiana adults revealed that 1.5% had tried snus after its introduction.<sup>16</sup>

## SOURCES

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