



TOBACCO

Protect your health by avoiding all tobacco products.¹ The nicotine found in cigarettes and smokeless tobacco is a powerful, addictive drug. Once tobacco users are addicted, it becomes difficult (but not impossible) to quit using smokeless tobacco or to stop smoking.² Smokeless tobacco is just as hazardous to your health as cigarettes.

Tobacco products contain numerous harmful ingredients, including ammonia, arsenic, carbon monoxide, formaldehyde, hydrogen cyanide, lead, mercury, and nicotine.³ At least 19 types of cancer-causing substances, called nitrosamines, are found in tobacco products.

Using tobacco causes many health problems and diseases. The risk of developing lung cancer is 15-30 times greater for smokers than for non-smokers. Also, breathing secondhand smoke (someone else's smoke) can be as dangerous as smoking.⁴

Smokers and smokeless tobacco users can also develop cancers of the cheek, esophagus, lip, palate and tongue; bad breath, gum disease, receding gums, and loss of teeth; a black hairy tongue, brown, stained, and ground-down teeth, and a dulled sense of taste. In addition, tobacco users who have a tooth extraction or surgery heal slowly and risk infection, such as a dry socket.¹

Oral cancer is serious. When it spreads to the lymph nodes in the neck, the prognosis is significantly worse than when it is localized orally.⁵ Death and disfigurement can result when oral cancer is detected in its late stages. Practice prevention and early detection³ of oral cancers by visiting a dentist every six months for screenings during your exam.

When tobacco use ends, blood pressure, pulse rate and skin temperature return to normal within 20 minutes. Within eight hours, high levels of carbon monoxide in the blood return to normal. Within a few weeks, circulation improves, the sense of taste and smell improves, and the former tobacco user has fewer colds and more energy. It is never too late to stop!

For more information, contact the Division of Public Health, Bureau of Oral Health and Dental Services, at 302-744-4554 and www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/hsm/ohphome.html.



Resources

1. American Dental Association. 2014. *Smokeless Tobacco*. In Mouth Healthy. Retrieved February 12, 2015 from: <http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/s/smokeless-tobacco>
2. American Dental Association. 2014. *Smoking and Tobacco*. In Mouth Healthy. Retrieved February 12, 2015 from: <http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/s/smoking-and-tobacco>
3. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. July 9 2013. *Harmful and Potentially Harmful Constituents in Tobacco Products and Tobacco Smoke: Established List*. In U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Retrieved February 12, 2015 from: <http://www.fda.gov/TobaccoProducts/GuidanceComplianceRegulatoryInformation/ucm297786.htm>
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. May 6 2014. *What Are the Risk Factors for Lung Cancer?* In Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved February 12, 2015 from: http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/lung/basic_info/risk_factors.htm
5. The Oral Cancer Foundation. August 2014. *Oral Cancer Facts*. In The Oral Cancer Foundation. Retrieved February 12, 2015 from: <http://www.oralcancerfoundation.org/facts/>