

Stopping Smokeless Tobacco Use: Care Instructions



Your Care Instructions

Smokeless tobacco comes in many forms, such as snuff and chewing tobacco:

- **Snuff** is finely ground tobacco sold in cans or pouches. Most of the time, snuff is used by putting a "pinch" or "dip" between the lower lip or cheek and the gum.
- **Chewing tobacco** is sold as loose leaves, plugs, or twists. It is chewed or placed between the cheek and the gum or teeth.

There are plenty of reasons to stop using smokeless tobacco. These products are harmful. They are not risk-free alternatives to smoking. Smokeless tobacco contains nicotine, which is addicting. Though using smokeless tobacco is less harmful than smoking cigarettes, it can cause serious health problems, such as:

- White patches or red sores in your mouth that can turn into mouth cancer involving the lip, tongue, or cheek.
- Tooth loss and other dental problems.
- Gum disease. Your gums may pull away from your teeth and not grow back.

People who use smokeless tobacco crave the nicotine in it. Giving up smokeless tobacco is much harder than simply changing a habit. Your body has to stop craving the nicotine. It is hard to quit, but you can do it. Many tools are available for people who want to quit using smokeless tobacco. You may find that combining tools works best for you.

There are several steps to quitting. First you get ready to quit. Then you get support to help you. After that, you learn new skills and behaviors to quit. For many people, a necessary step is getting and using medicine.

Your doctor will help you set up the plan that best meets your needs. You may want to attend a tobacco cessation program. When you choose a program, look for one that has proven success. Ask your doctor for ideas. You will greatly increase your chances of success if you take medicine as well as get counseling or join a cessation program.

Some of the changes you feel when you first quit smokeless tobacco are uncomfortable. Your body will miss the nicotine at first, and you may feel short-tempered and grumpy. You may have trouble sleeping or concentrating. Medicine can help you deal with these symptoms. You may struggle with changing your habits and rituals. The last step is the tricky one: Be prepared for the urge to use smokeless tobacco to continue for a time. This is a lot to deal with, but keep at it. You will feel better.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Ask your family, friends, and coworkers for support. You have a better chance of quitting if you have help and support.
- Join a support group for people who are trying to quit using smokeless tobacco.
- Set a quit date. Pick your date carefully so that it is not right in the middle of a big deadline or stressful time. After you quit, do not use smokeless tobacco even once. Get rid of all spit cups, cans, and pouches after your last use. Clean your house and your clothes so that they do not smell of tobacco.
- Learn how to be a non-user. Think about ways you can avoid those things that make you reach for tobacco.
 - Learn some ways to deal with cravings, like calling a friend or going for a walk. Cravings often pass.
 - Avoid situations that put you at greatest risk for using smokeless tobacco. For some people, it is hard to spend time with friends without dipping or chewing. For others, they might skip a coffee break with coworkers who smoke or use smokeless tobacco.
 - Change your daily routine. Take a different route to work, or eat a meal in a different place.
- Cut down on stress. Calm yourself or release tension by doing an activity you enjoy, such as reading a book, taking a hot

bath, or gardening.

- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about nicotine replacement therapy. You still get nicotine, but you do not use tobacco. Nicotine replacement products help you slowly reduce the amount of nicotine you need. Many of these products are available over the counter. They include nicotine patches, gum, lozenges, and inhalers.
- Ask your doctor about bupropion (Wellbutrin) or varenicline (Chantix), which are prescription medicines. They do not contain nicotine. They help you by reducing withdrawal symptoms, such as stress and anxiety.
- Get regular exercise. Having healthy habits will help your body move past its craving for nicotine.
- Be prepared to keep trying. Most people are not successful the first few times they try to quit. Do not get mad at yourself if you use tobacco again. Make a list of things you learned, and think about when you want to try again, such as next week, next month, or next year.

Care instructions adapted under license by Cc092_suncoast Womens Care Of Trinity LLC. This care instruction is for use with your licensed healthcare professional. If you have questions about a medical condition or this instruction, always ask your healthcare professional. Healthwise, Incorporated disclaims any warranty or liability for your use of this information.