

SMOKELESS TOBACCO: A Spittin' Image



DISCUSSION GUIDE

SMOKELESS TOBACCO: A Spittin' Image
is a 14-minute video for use in substance
abuse education in grades 4 through 9.

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INTRODUCTION

"No one ever died from it." "A little bit now and then won't hurt me. Besides, I can stop anytime." "There's no evidence that it's dangerous." "My friends use it. It's not hurting them." "Dipping snuff makes me tough."

These are just a few of the myths about smokeless tobacco. Tobacco companies are promoting smokeless tobacco products like chewing tobacco and snuff as safe alternates to smoking. Their ads target young people who may never have been regular smokers. Youngsters need to know that advertising lures them by playing upon their desire for autonomy, social acceptance and sexual attractiveness.

Young people who see glamour or an assertion of independence in using tobacco or smokeless tobacco products are not easily swayed by health arguments. This video is most effective in demonstrating to preteens and teens that chewing tobacco and dipping snuff are ugly habits and are offensive to others. Once in the grip of powerful and addictive nicotine, they may not be able to quit. The best way to overcome a nicotine addiction is never to use smokeless tobacco in the first place or, as the video advises, **"Be smart. Don't start."**

SYNOPSIS

This 14-minute educational video enhances the awareness of the dangers of smokeless tobacco. Starting with illustrations of media messages that smokeless tobacco will make you stronger and look and feel better, it immediately refutes the myths about smokeless tobacco.

Factual information is provided by a young narrator, former users and health professionals. This is very important especially after students have seen messages indicating positive behaviors both physiological and sociological.

Students will see the damaging effects caused by smokeless tobacco use and hear why people start using smokeless tobacco.

Students are introduced to the seriousness and expense of an addiction. They will see how much money can be spent per day by those who choose to use smokeless tobacco. Emphasis is placed on how that same amount of money may be spent on other things that are good for them and which increase the quality of their lives.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will see graphic evidence of how one can of chewing tobacco is equal in nicotine to three packs of cigarettes.
- They will learn that chewing is not a substitute for smoking but rather is a more harmful way to introduce nicotine into the body.
- They will hear from their peers what image chewers and dippers really project, and hear adolescent girls describe how boys that chew are really not what they would want in a friend.

For students, the ultimate lessons are:

- Smokeless tobacco does not make them any better
- This is not a way to get or keep friends
- This is not how to be accepted
- Friends that use tobacco are friends to the nicotine, not to them
- Smokeless tobacco is addictive
- It's expensive
- And, it's deadly

**The message of the video is:
BE SMART. DON'T START.**

EFFECTS OF SMOKELESS TOBACCO

SHORT TERM

- Decreases the sense of smell
- Reduces the sense of taste
- Causes dental problems such as receding gums, especially at the point where the tobacco is placed in the mouth
- Causes bad breath
- Results in a discoloration of the teeth

LONG TERM

- Effects the central nervous system
- Irritates mouth tissue
- Causes white, leathery patches in the mouth (leukoplakia)
- Can cause cancer to the tongue, lip, throat or mouth
- Can result in gum disease and tooth loss

TERMS

ADDICTION - Physical and/or emotional dependence on a substance or behavior. A person can become so addicted to smokeless tobacco that they experience withdrawal symptoms if they cut down or quit.

ADVERTISING - Printed or broadcasted public announcements that emphasize desirable qualities to arouse a desire to buy, patronize or experience. People seen in smokeless tobacco ads may not use chew or snuff but are paid to say they do.

CHEW, DIP, PINCH, SNUFF, PLUG or DIRT - Various names for smokeless tobacco products.

LEUKOPLAKIA - White, thickened, rippled patches of tissue inside the mouth, considered precancerous.

NICOTINE - The addictive chemical found in tobacco which produces a stimulating effect on the body.

PRECANCEROUS - Showing a likelihood of becoming cancerous.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

AND CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

1) Ask students to bring in magazine/newspaper ads for smokeless tobacco products and analyze them using the following questions:

- What age group does the ad target?
- Is the ad aimed at males or females?
- Does the ad imply that dipping or chewing smokeless tobacco means you are grown-up, a better athlete?
- Is there a product testimonial from a personality or professional athlete? Why do you suppose a person such as this is featured by the advertiser?
- Are there health warnings on the product?

2) Smokeless tobacco has been called a safe substitute for cigarettes. Discuss why this is not correct.

3) Answer these questions. How old should a person be before he/she can legally start using smokeless tobacco? Why does peer pressure or having problems make young people more likely to smoke or dip snuff?

4) Research the facts on smokeless tobacco and prepare a report for class. Use posters, graphs and visual aids to show:

- who consumers are
- what the health hazards are
- the appeal (what attracts people to use smokeless tobacco)
- the myths

5) Prepare a list of responses that a non-dipper might use to decline a friend's invitation to try smokeless tobacco. Some suggestions might include: "No thanks." "I don't need it." And, "I value my health."

RESOURCES

American Dental Association (ADA)

211 East Chicago Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611
(312) 440-2500

Babe Ruth League

1770 Brunswick Avenue
Trenton, NJ 08638
(609) 695-1434

Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP)

5600 Fishers Lane, 9th floor
Rockville, MD 20857
(301) 443-0365

Families in Action Drug Information Center

2296 Henderson Mill Rd., Suite 204
Atlanta, GA 30345
(404) 934-6364

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI)

P. O. Box 2345
Rockville, MD 20952
(301) 468-2600

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)

5600 Fishers Lane, Room 10-05
Rockville, MD 20857
(301) 443-6480

Stop Teen-Age Addiction to Tobacco (STAT)

511 East Columbus Avenue
Springfield, MA 01105
(413) 732-STAT

- Your State Commission on Alcohol & Drug Abuse
- Your State Division of the American Cancer Society
- Your local Drug and Alcohol Council
- Your School District's Drug Prevention Education Program

READ AND LEARN MORE ABOUT SMOKELESS TOBACCO

Substance Abuse Prevention Activities for Secondary Students, Patricia A. Gerne, R. N. and Timothy A. Gerne, Jr., Ed.D., Prentice Hall, Englewood, NJ 07632, © 1991

How to Say No & Keep Your Friends: Peer Pressure Reversal for Teens and Preteens, Sharon Scott, Human Resources development Press, Amherst, MA, © 1988

"Through with Chew" A Student Quiz available from the American Academy of Otolaryngology, 1 Prince St., Alexandria, VA 22314, (703) 836-4444

HELPFUL TIPS FOR STUDENTS

The American Cancer Society suggests that if you use chewing tobacco or snuff, you check your mouth once a month for these warning signs:

- a sore that bleeds easily and doesn't heal
- a lump or thickening anywhere in your mouth
- soreness or swelling that doesn't go away
- a red or white patch that doesn't go away
- trouble chewing, swallowing, or moving your tongue or jaw

Tips from the National Cancer Institute and the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery to quit smokeless tobacco use:

- Think of reasons you want to quit
- Pick a date to quit
- Throw out all smokeless tobacco products
- Ask for help from friends, family members, teachers, coaches, etc.
- Find alternatives like gum, nuts, etc.
- Find activities, hobbies and exercise, to take your mind off smokeless tobacco
- Talk with your school nurse, counselor, family doctor or dentist
- Remember everyone is different, develop a personal plan
- Reward yourself!

This discussion guide was prepared by **Linda Jones** and **Dolores Shavers**, Instructional Specialists with Dallas Independent School District's Office of Drug Programs. Both are licensed Professional Counselors, Certified Chemical Dependency Specialists, and Certified Compulsive Gambling Counselors. They specialize in working with clients and students who suffer with Agoraphobia and panic disorders. Additionally, they maintain a private practice and have done training and public speaking at both the state and national levels.

Some information cited in this guide was obtained from materials available from the American Cancer Society, the National Cancer Institute, and the American Dental Association.



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