

Snus: Another Deadly Tobacco Product

What is snus?

Snus (sounds like “snoose”) is a smokeless tobacco product, similar to snuff and chewing tobacco. The moist, ground tobacco often comes in small teabag-like pouches that are placed between the cheek and gums. Snus are flavored, scentless, spitless tobacco. With a variety of flavors (original, frost, and spice), snus appears strikingly similar to chewing gum.



Who uses snus?

Designed to eliminate the need to spit, snus has become an attractive product to youth in schools and other settings where smoking is prohibited. In general, tobacco use is higher among male students for all products except cigarettes.¹

- Smokeless tobacco use is higher among male high school students (13.4%) than female students (2.3%)²
- 7.9% of high school students and 2.8% of middle school students are current smokeless tobacco users³⁴
- 10.3% of white high school students, 4.7% of Hispanic high school students, and 1.2% of black high school students are current smokeless tobacco users⁵

Dangerous Health Consequences of Snus

There is no safe form of tobacco. Snus is not regulated. Smokeless tobacco, like snus, may contain 28 cancer-causing agents⁶. Snus is not a safe substitute for smoking cigarettes. Snus can lead to addiction and dependence⁷.

Use of snus places youth at-risk for numerous health problems⁸, including:

- Oral cancer
- Pancreatic cancer
- Gum disease
- Sores and spots on mouth



Marketing Snus to Youth

Marlboro and Camel introduced their new snus products in 2007⁹. The tobacco companies have launched aggressive marketing campaigns, positioning snus as a less harmful and convenient alternative to cigarettes and cigars.

The absence of federal regulation over tobacco products gives tobacco companies free reign to design and advertise snus, with no federal agency verifying health claims or how the products are marketed. Marlboro and Camel display their flavored products in bright colors, trendy display cases, and at popular sporting events. These marketing tactics are designed to recruit new youth users, maintain addictions and discourage quitting.

¹ American Cancer Society. "Questions About Smoking, Tobacco, and Health." Retrieved June 13, 2008, from http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED_10_2x_Questions_About_Smoking_Tobacco_and_Health.asp.

² CDC. "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance-United States, 2007," *MMWR Surveillance*, (5)SS-4, June 6, 2008, <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>.

³ CDC. "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance-United States, 2007," *MMWR Surveillance*, (5)SS-4, June 6, 2008, <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>

⁴ CDC. "Tobacco Use, Access, And Exposure to Tobacco in Media Among Middle and High School Students-United States, 2004" Fact Sheet: Smokeless Tobacco," *MMWR*, 54(12), 2005. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5412a1.htm>.

⁵ CDC. "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance-United States, 2007," *MMWR Surveillance*, (5)SS-4, June 6, 2008, <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm>.

⁶ National Cancer Institute. "Smokeless Tobacco or Health: An International Perspective," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute, 1992, <http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/tcrb/monographs/2/index.html>.

⁷ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "The Health Consequences of Using Smokeless Tobacco: A Report of the Advisory Committee to the Surgeon General," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service. NIH, 1986, <http://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/NN/B/B/F/C/>.

⁸ American Cancer Society. "Questions About Smoking, Tobacco, and Health." Retrieved June 13, 2008, from http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED_10_2x_Questions_About_Smoking_Tobacco_and_Health.asp

⁹ Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. "Smokeless Tobacco in the United States," Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, 2007, <http://tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/index.php?CategoryID=33>.