Spit Tobacco Use in Indiana

What is Spit Tobacco?
Spit tobacco, or smokeless tobacco, comes in two forms: moist snuff and chew. Snuff is a finely ground tobacco and is usually placed between the bottom lip and gum and held there. This is also referred to as “dipping”. Chewing tobacco is shredded tobacco leaves placed between the cheek and gum. Spit tobacco contains 3,000 chemicals, including 28 cancer-causing agents such as formaldehyde, arsenic, cadmium, and polonium-210.

Spit Tobacco Use among Adults in Indiana and the U.S.
- An estimated 4.4% of Hoosier adults were current spit tobacco users in 2015, similar to the U.S. median rate of 4.0%.
- Spit tobacco use is substantially higher among men (8.7%) than women (0.4%) in Indiana. Among both men and women, there was little change in smokeless tobacco use rates between 2011 and 2015.
- Among Indiana men in 2015, spit tobacco use was most prevalent among younger men ages 18-24 (15.6%), and those with less than a high school education (13.5%). Spit tobacco use was also higher among white men (8.8%) than African American men (5.1%).

Spit Tobacco Use among Indiana Youth
- In 2014, 1.8% of middle school students and 8.0% of high school students in Indiana reported using spit tobacco.
- Like among adults, spit tobacco use among youth is far higher among males than females.
- Approximately 2.7% of middle school males and 13.6% of high school males in Indiana reported current use of spit tobacco in 2014, somewhat higher than spit tobacco use rates among middle school males (2.1%) and high school males (9.9%) nationwide.

Quick Facts
- Spit tobacco is not a safe alternative to cigarettes.
- Spit tobacco increases the risk of a number of health problems including:
  - Cancer of the mouth, esophagus, and pancreas
  - Heart disease
  - Stroke
  - Mouth diseases
  - Gum disease and tooth decay

In 2015, 4.4% of Hoosier adults used spit tobacco.
In 2014, 8.0% of Indiana high school students reported currently using spit tobacco.
Spit tobacco use is far higher among Hoosier men (8.7%) than among women (0.4%).
There has been little change in spit tobacco use rates among Hoosier adults and youth in recent years.
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Spit Tobacco Use among Indiana Youth by Race/Ethnicity*

In 2014, white youth reported the highest rate of spit tobacco use among high school students (9.4%). This was significantly higher than spit tobacco use rates among Hispanic (2.7%) and African American (less than 1%) high school students. These rates were similar to nationwide rates of spit tobacco use among white (7.8%), African American (1.1%), and Hispanic (3.1%) high school students.4

### Negative Health Effects

Spit tobacco is not a safe alternative to cigarettes. People who use spit tobacco are at risk of many health problems including:

- **Cancers** of the mouth, esophagus, and pancreas.6
- **Mouth diseases**: Spit tobacco use can lead to leukoplakia, a disease of the mouth characterized by white patches and oral lesions on the cheeks, gums, and tongue.6 Leukoplakia can lead to oral cancer.1,6
- **Poor dental health**: Spit tobacco use can cause gum disease and tooth decay and can increase the risk of tooth loss.6
- **Cardiovascular diseases**: Spit tobacco use increases the risk of dying from heart disease or a stroke.1,6
- **Addiction**: Spit tobacco contains nicotine, which is highly addictive.6

### Resources for Quitting Spit Tobacco

Tobacco users should contact a health care provider for assistance. Additionally, tobacco users may call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit www.QuitNowIndiana.com for evidence-based support, advice and resources.

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3 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, United States 2015.

*Due to the small number of African American and Hispanic students who reported spit tobacco use, rates for these populations may be unstable and should be interpreted with caution.

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