

# Why is Smokeless Tobacco Harmful?

Smokeless tobacco contains thousands of different chemicals. Some of the chemicals fit into these groups.

## Sweeteners

- Smokeless tobacco has high amounts of sugar.
- When these sugars mix with the bacteria that naturally live in your mouth, plaque forms on your teeth. The plaque makes acids that eat away the protective coating on your teeth called enamel. This causes cavities.

## Salts

- Large amounts of flavoring salts are used in smokeless tobacco.
- These salts can increase your risk for high blood pressure.

## Abrasives

- There are many materials in smokeless tobacco that act like sandpaper. Over time, these wear down the surfaces of your teeth and lining of your mouth.
- Damage occurs to your teeth over time from these abrasives.
- White patches in the mouth called leukoplakia and recessed gums are more common in smokeless tobacco users.

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**Learn more about your health care.**

## **Cancer Causing Agents**

- There are 28 chemicals in smokeless tobacco that can cause cancer. These are also known as carcinogens.
- Cancers of the mouth are common in smokeless tobacco users.

But there is good news. When you quit using smokeless tobacco, you lessen your risk of health problems from its use.

Talk with your doctor if you have questions about quitting tobacco use, or call Ohio Quits at 1-800-Quit-Now or 1-800-784-8669.

✦ **Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: [health-info@osu.edu](mailto:health-info@osu.edu).**