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in consultation with

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EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT CHEWING AND DIPPING

...But were afraid to ask

What is Chewing and Dipping

Tobacco is chewed by placing a golf-ball size wad or quid between the cheek and teeth and sucking on it. Snuff is dipped by placing a pinch between the lower lip and teeth where it mixes with saliva and is absorbed. Chewing and dipping are considered to be undesirable socially by most people. The user has an increased amount of saliva and must either swallow the tobacco juices or spit often. Users also develop bad breath and discolored teeth.

What Tobacco Does to the Mouth

Tobacco and its by-products are extremely irritating to sensitive oral tissues. "Smokeless" tobacco causes many problems.

A look inside a dipper's or chewer's mouth will frequently reveal soft tissues on the inside of the cheek that appear peculiarly wrinkled, thickened and white (very much like the hide of an elephant)! These leathery appearing areas are called "leukoplakia" (resemble smoker's white patch). Leukoplakia is caused by irritation from direct contact with tobacco juice. Many cancer-producing substances have been identified in tobacco juices. About 6% of patients with leukoplakia develop oral cancer.

Tobacco chewers and snuff dippers tend to have greater tooth wear than non-users. The gums also tend to recede from the teeth in areas near where tobacco is held. The bare roots are then more susceptible to decay and are more sensitive to heat, cold, air, certain foods and chemicals. Sweetened tobacco may increase tooth decay.

Tobacco products decrease the user's ability to taste and smell bitter, salty and sweet foods. Dippers and chewers use more salt on their food. Additional sugar may also be required. Excessive salt contributes to abnormal blood pressure and kidney disease.

Tobacco juices also contain hundreds of chemicals which may delay wound healing. Tobacco can be especially undesirable when a tooth has been pulled or when oral surgery has taken place.

Other Effects of Nicotine

Nicotine is the habit forming part of tobacco and is in tobacco juice as well as smoke. It is readily absorbed through the lining of the mouth of the chewer or dipper and directly affects the nervous system. Nicotine first causes the user to be stimulated or excited and then causes him to be depressed or let down. To feel good a person with the nicotine habit needs a "booster" every 20 to 30 minutes while awake.

Nicotine also affects the heart and the rest of the circulatory system. As nicotine enters the bloodstream, the arteries tighten and become smaller, the blood platelets clot and the heartbeat rate increases. Since the heart is beating faster, it is pumping more blood through a narrower opening. A rise in blood pressure may result which may increase your risk of strokes and heart attacks.

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