

Overview of smokeless tobacco

You may think that using smokeless tobacco is less harmful than actually smoking cigarettes. But using dip is not a safe substitute for smoking. And there is no scientific evidence that smokeless tobacco can help a person quit smoking.

The dangers of dip

All tobacco products, including smokeless tobacco, contain nicotine, which is addictive. With dip, the nicotine is absorbed through the lining of the mouth and moves through the blood then into the brain. The nicotine continues to be absorbed into the bloodstream even after the dip is removed from the mouth – and stays in the bloodstream longer than with smoking. And dip can lead to nicotine addiction and dependence.

Reasons to quit dip

At least 30 chemicals in smokeless tobacco have been found to cause cancer. Smokeless tobacco may cause oral cancer, esophageal cancer and pancreatic cancer. It may also cause heart disease, stroke and oral lesions other than cancer, such as pre-cancerous white patches in the mouth.

But there are other benefits to quitting dip, too. You'll look better, food will taste better, and you'll have more money to spend on other things you enjoy.

How to manage dip cravings

Tobacco cravings tend to last about 5 to 10 minutes. When those cravings hit, try these tactics to help you handle the urge to use dip:

- Change up your routine and focus on something else
- Keep your mouth busy by chewing gum or drinking water
- Find a physical activity like walking up and down the stairs
- Take deep breaths
- Focus on the reasons why you want to give up tobacco



Remember ...

It's critical to address not only the physical, but also the mental and emotional symptoms of withdrawal. Counseling and self-help materials may help.

How to handle dip withdrawal

Symptoms of dip withdrawal can include tobacco cravings, feeling sad, trouble with sleep, lack of focus, irritability, restlessness, and hunger or weight gain. Although these symptoms will subside the longer you abstain from dip, there are two major steps you can take to get through the withdrawal period:

1. **Avoid stress:** Eat healthful meals, exercise regularly, take time to relax, and connect with friends and family.
2. **Avoid triggers:** Try to stay away from people, places and things that trigger your cravings, and have a plan for coping with them without using dip when you do encounter them.

How to quit dip for good

Like smoking, using smokeless tobacco can be a very difficult habit to break, so it's important to have a game plan. Start by asking yourself:

- Why do I want to quit?
- When do I want to quit?
- How do I want to quit?

While some people find it more effective to go "cold turkey," others prefer to wean themselves off of dip by gradually cutting down on how much, when and where they use.

Fortunately, there are several programs and services that can assist people in their efforts to quit, including:

- Enrolling in the UMR Tobacco Cessation program at 1-800-207-7680
- Calling the National Cancer Institute (NCI) Quitline at 1-877-44U-QUIT
- Using NCI's LiveHelp online chat <https://livehelp.cancer.gov>



Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, cdc.gov; Smokefree.gov; National Cancer Institute, cancer.gov; American Cancer Society, cancer.org; National Institute of Mental Health, nimh.nih.gov

© 2018 United HealthCare Services, Inc. UM1198 0818

No part of this document may be reproduced without permission. The information provided in this document is for general educational purposes only. It is not intended as medical advice and cannot replace or substitute for individualized medical care and advice from a personal physician. Individuals should always consult with their physicians regarding any health questions or concerns.



A UnitedHealthcare Company