

Quitting Chew

What is Chew?¹

Chew is tobacco that is not smoked.

- It is placed between the cheek and gums.
- Nicotine gets in the body through the lining of the mouth.
- Other names are smokeless tobacco, spit tobacco, dip, snuff or snus.

Nicotine and Chew^{1,2}

- The amount of nicotine you get depends on:¹
 - Brand
 - How much you use
 - How long you leave it in
- An average-size dip left in your mouth for 30 minutes can give you as much nicotine as smoking 3 cigarettes.²

What's in Chew?³

In addition to nicotine, chew contains at least 28 cancer-causing chemicals like:³

- Polonium 210 – used to make sheet plastics
- Benzene – found in rubber cement
- Nitrosamines- can cause cancer

Other chemicals:

- Cadmium - used in batteries
- Cyanide - poison
- Arsenic – found in rat poison
- Lead - once used in paint

Health Risks⁴

- Cancer Chew can cause cancer of the mouth, tongue, cheek, gum, throat and pancreas.
- Mouth lesions. About 3 out of 4 daily chewers have leukoplakia, white patches in the mouth that can cause cancer.
- Heart disease. The nicotine in chew can make heart rate and blood pressure go up, which can lead to heart disease.
- Gum disease. Even with regular dental care, chew can cause tooth loss, receding gums, stained teeth, and bad breath.
- Cavities. Chew contains a lot of sugar that can weaken teeth and cause cavities.

Warning Signs⁵

Talk with your doctor if you have:

- A lump in the neck
- Change in the voice
- A growth or white spots in the mouth
- Hard time swallowing
- Earache that won't go away
- Blood in saliva or phlegm
- Changes in skin



Quitting Chew

Before You Quit

- Focus on why you want to quit. List your reasons to quit (e.g., cost, dental issues).
- Write down your main reason. Put it in a place where you can see it.
- Plan how you want to quit. Here are some ways to do it:
 - Cold Turkey. Quit all tobacco use at once.
 - Cutting down. Count the number of dips you have each day. Cut down and chew on a schedule. For example:
 - If you chew 10 times a day, chew just 8 (one dip every two hours).
 - Slowly add to the amount of time between dips.
 - Try going 2 hours, then 3 hours, then quit altogether.
 - Quit Aids. With a doctor's okay, try nicotine patches, gum, lozenges or a medication like Zyban® or Chantix®. These aids can help cut withdrawal symptoms like cravings and irritability.
- Set a quit date. Pick an exact date. If you commit to a date, your chance for quitting is better. Don't plan to quit at a stressful time.

On Your Quit Day

- Get rid of it all! Throw away anything that reminds you of chewing, like spit cans and leftover dip.
- Avoid triggers. Stay away from things that make you want to dip.
- Try something new. Instead of dipping, use sunflower seeds, gum, jerky, herbal snuff, ground mint leaves, and caffeine-free tea bags instead. Also, you can use straws, toothpicks, hard candies, and carrot sticks.
- Be ready for the challenge. At first, you may feel irritable, hungry, nervous, or distracted.
 - Many people have only mild symptoms, and some have none at all.
 - It's true that withdrawal symptoms don't feel good, but they are harmless and will pass.

Staying Quit

- Practice new ways of coping. The more you use your strategies, the better chance you have of staying quit.
- Ask for support. Stay in touch with people who want to help. Even just one phone call a day can help.
- Be aware of your thoughts. It's common to relapse if you think, "I'll have just one dip." If that thought comes up, replace it with "Chewing is not an option."
- Reward yourself every day. You've earned it!

1. National Cancer Institute (2010). Smokeless Tobacco and Cancer
2. Tobacco Stops With Me (2019). Smokeless Tobacco Facts
3. University of Rochester Medical Center (2019). Smokeless Tobacco
4. American Cancer Society (2015). Health Risks of Smokeless Tobacco
5. American Academy of Otolaryngology (2019). Head and Neck Cancer