

fast facts

tobacco

■ **Overview:** If anyone ever opens an Advertising Hall of Shame, we hope the genius who coined the phrase “Going Smokeless” gets a featured spot in the Health Disasters Annex of the Snake Oil Pavilion.

Because before that campaign’s roll-out in 1970, chewing tobacco and snuff seemed near the

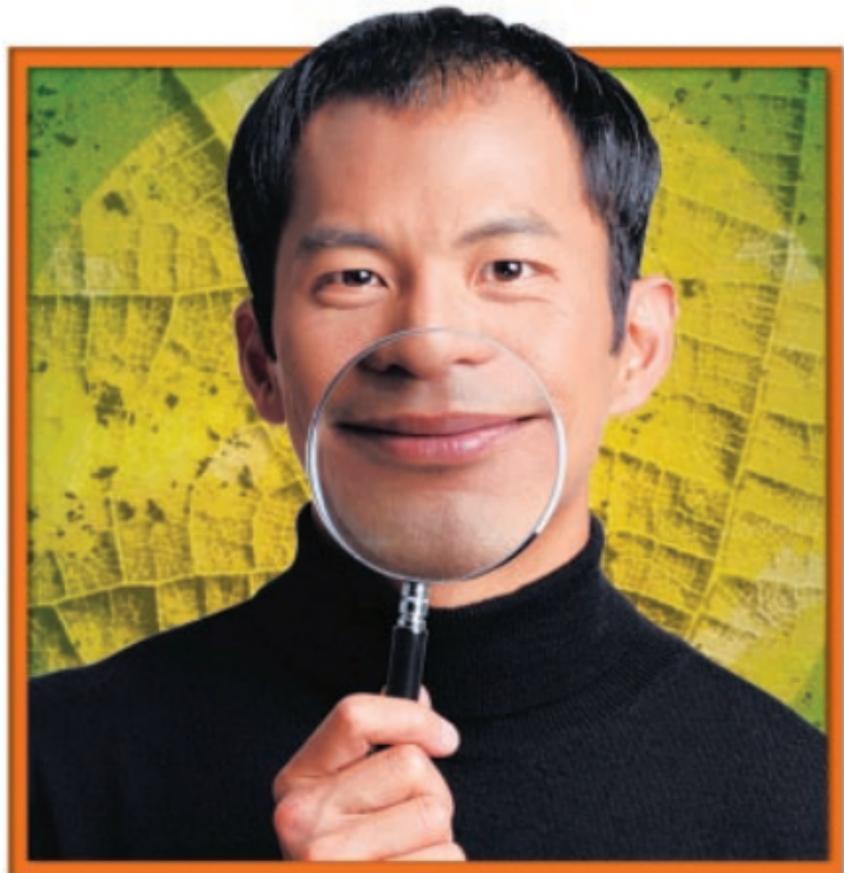


end of their runs as socially-accepted, legal, addictive products. “Going Smokeless” changed all that, pumping up sales, even making “a little pinch between the cheek and gums” seem like a safe alternative to smoking. It wasn’t. And it still isn’t.



■ **Appearance:** Snuff is cured, shredded tobacco that’s sold moist or as a dried, ground powder. Chewing tobacco is made from stemless tobacco leaves. Both forms are often flavored with mint or menthol additives.

■ **Actions/Effects:** The drug that smokeless tobacco delivers is the stimulant *nicotine*, which acts on receptors for the neurotransmitter *acetylcholine* in the brain, triggering changes throughout the body. Effects are identical to those of smoking and include feelings of alertness and relaxation, and increases in both heart rate and blood pressure.



■ **Risks/Side Effects:** Common side effects linked to smokeless tobacco are bad breath, tooth loss and discoloration, and inflammation of soft tissues in the mouth. Long-term use increases the risk of oral cancer. Recent studies have found precancerous lesions in nearly half of current teenage users.



■ **Duration:** The effects of nicotine in smokeless tobacco fade within 20-30 minutes of use.

■ **Addiction Potential:** Nicotine is highly addictive, whether it's delivered to the body via spit or smoke. Symptoms of withdrawal include anxiety, restlessness, irritability, impaired concentration, and increased appetite.

■ **Trends:** The growth prospects of smokeless tobacco have taken a major hit in recent years, in the form of deals the industry has struck with states in an attempt to avoid future liability lawsuits. Under terms of one national agreement, the industry promised to disclose ingredients in smokeless products, include larger warning labels on packages, and allow regulation of nicotine by the Food and Drug Administration.

■ **Demographics:** Smokeless tobacco use is primarily a problem involving young males. While previous-month use was reported by 8.5 percent of the high school class of 2010, past-month use by H.S. senior males stood at 15.7 percent. Currently, an estimated 8.6 million Americans use smokeless tobacco products regularly.



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