

What do you know about Spit Tobacco?

Circle One

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|---|---|---|
| 1. Spit tobacco helps athletes perform better. | T | F |
| 2. People who advertise spit tobacco products always tell the truth. | T | F |
| 3. Snuff and chewing tobacco are forms of spit tobacco. | T | F |
| 4. Spit tobacco is not addictive. | T | F |
| 5. Spit tobacco products must carry a warning label on the package. | T | F |
| 6. It may be harder to quit spit tobacco than to stop smoking. | T | F |
| 7. Many people begin to use spit tobacco because of peer pressure. | T | F |
| 8. Use of spit tobacco can cause oral cancer. | T | F |
| 9. Tobacco was used before Columbus discovered America. | T | F |
| 10. A person who likes themselves is more likely to resist peer pressure when offered spit tobacco. | T | F |
| 11. In Ontario, a 16 year old may legally purchase tobacco products. | T | F |
| 12. Spit tobacco is inexpensive. | T | F |
| 13. Using spit tobacco is a safe alternative to smoking cigarettes. | T | F |
| 14. Spit tobacco does not affect the gums and teeth. | T | F |
| 15. It is legal to advertise spit tobacco products on television. | T | F |

Adapted with permission from the Thunder Bay District Health Unit



Answers – What do you know about spit tobacco?

1. Spit tobacco help athletes perform better.

False. Some athletes use spit tobacco because they think it gives them a performance boost. On the contrary, a study of professional baseball players found no connection between the use of spit tobacco and player performance. In fact, the "buzz" or rush that people feel when they use spit tobacco may actually worsen an athlete's performance because it is caused by an increase in heart rate and blood pressure, thereby putting undue strain on the heart.¹

2. People who advertise spit tobacco products always tell the truth.

False. Spit tobacco companies have aggressive marketing campaigns to introduce brands of spit tobacco with strong "candy like" flavors and nicotine, to target youth. These campaigns are designed to make youth think that spit tobacco is cool and that everybody does it. Unfortunately, spit tobacco ads do not tell the whole truth. Rather, spit tobacco ads are designed to cover up one simple fact – spit tobacco is very, very bad for your health.

3. Snuff and chewing tobacco are forms of spit tobacco.

True. Snuff and chewing tobacco are the two most common forms of spit tobacco.

4. Spit tobacco is not addictive.

False. Like all tobacco, spit tobacco contains nicotine, which is addictive. In addition, spit tobacco contains more nicotine than cigarettes.

5. Spit tobacco products must carry a warning label on the package.

True. Warning labels must be placed on all packages sold in Canada. The health warnings on tobacco products are required under the world-precedent setting Tobacco Products Information Regulations, which were adopted under the Tobacco Act passed by the Canadian Parliament in 1997.²

In fact, Canada was the first country to require health warnings covering 20% of the package front and back; it was also the first country to require black and white health warnings at the top of the package and covering more than 30% of the front and back (25% plus a border).³

¹ The American Council on Science and Health, 2003

² Canadian Cancer Society, January 2006

³ The International Development Research Centre, July 2006

6. It may be harder to quit using spit tobacco than to stop smoking.

True. The amount of nicotine absorbed through spit tobacco is three to four times more than with a cigarette. Withdrawal from regular spit tobacco use results in the same withdrawal symptoms and discomfort seen in heavy smokers attempting to quit.

7. Many people begin to use spit tobacco because of peer pressure.

True. Peer pressure can be hard to handle sometimes, but the consequences of starting to use spit tobacco are worse.

8. Use of spit tobacco can cause oral cancer.

True. Using spit tobacco increases the risk of cancer of the cheek and gum as much as 50 times.⁴ About half of all oral cancer victims die within five years.

9. Tobacco was used before Columbus discovered America.

True. Tobacco originated among Native Americans who grew it for medicinal and ceremonial purposes. In 1492, Columbus “discovers” tobacco upon arrival in America.

10. A person who likes themselves is more likely to resist peer pressure when offered spit tobacco.

True. Here are a few tips that can help you get out of a tough situation, and still keep your friends.

- Leave the area.
- Appear to be busy, deep in thought or distracted.
- Make an excuse, such as homework, chores or helping your parents.
- Change the subject.
- Make a joke out of it. "Yes, I'd really like to have my lips turn black".
- Act shocked. "I can't believe you're going to do that".
- Use flattery. "You're too smart to do that".
- Suggest a better idea and put it into action.
- Return the challenge. "Are you too scared to do it by yourself?"
- Just say **NO** and say it in a steady, confident voice.

⁴ 2001-2006 AADAC - Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission

11. In Ontario, a 16 year old may legally purchase tobacco products.

False. Before selling tobacco to any person who appears to be less than 25 years old, a retailer must request identification and be satisfied that the person is at least 19 years old.

In 1908, the Parliament passed the *Tobacco Restraint Act* prohibiting the sale of tobacco to persons under 16, and prohibiting such persons from purchasing or possessing tobacco.

12. Spit tobacco is inexpensive.

False. Spit tobacco can range from \$5.00 to more than \$15.00.

13. Using spit tobacco is a safe alternative to smoking cigarettes.

False. Spit tobacco is not a safe substitute for cigarettes and can harm your health in many ways. Spit tobacco has over 3,000 chemicals, including 28 known carcinogens.

14. Spit tobacco does not affect the gums and teeth.

False. People who use spit tobacco increase their risk of developing:

- **Mouth Cancer** – cancer of the cheeks, gums, lips and tongue.
- **Throat Cancer** – cancer of the voice box and cancer of the esophagus.
- **Heart disease** – heart attacks, strokes and high blood pressure.
- **Dental diseases** – stained teeth, tooth decay, receding gums, gum disease, bad breath and black hairy tongue.
- **Stomach problems** – ulcers, stomach upset, increased bowel activity and stomach cancer.
- **Loss of taste and smell** – causes loss of appetite which results in poor nutrition and poor health.
- **Physical changes** – fatigue, muscle weakness, dizziness and decreased physical performance.

15. It is legal to advertise spit tobacco products on television.

False. In Canada, advertising of tobacco products has been prohibited by the Hazardous Products Act as of May 1988.