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## **Smokeless Tobacco Use Remains High** *Tobacco Free Florida is raising awareness during “Through with Chew Week”*



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**Tallahassee, Fla.** – The Florida Department of Health’s Tobacco Free Florida Program is raising awareness about the dangers of smokeless tobacco – like chew and dip – during Through With Chew Week. This national public awareness campaign was created to reduce the use of smokeless tobacco among young people, and Tobacco Free Florida aims to help combat this deadly addiction. Through With Chew Week takes place Feb. 14-20, with the Great American Spit Out – a day when smokeless tobacco users join together to quit – on Feb.18.

Although youth cigarette smoking rates in Florida are at an all-time low, 4.9 percent of Florida high school students reported current use of smokeless tobacco products in 2015, the same rate it was in 2005, according to the Florida Youth Tobacco Survey.<sup>1</sup>

“Smokeless tobacco products contain harmful chemicals that are known to cause cancer,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. “Youth who use smokeless products are more likely to experiment with other types of tobacco. Research is clear that adolescent boys who use smokeless tobacco have a higher risk of becoming cigarette smokers.”

At least 28 cancer-causing chemicals have been identified in smokeless tobacco.<sup>2</sup> Smokeless tobacco users have an 80 percent higher risk of oral cancer and a 60 percent higher risk of esophageal cancer and pancreatic cancer compared to non-users.<sup>3</sup> Apart from cancer, smokeless tobacco users can develop other oral health issues, such as mouth sores, gum recession, tooth decay and permanent discoloration of teeth.<sup>4</sup> The use of some types of smokeless tobacco products is also associated with an increased risk of heart disease and fatal stroke.<sup>5</sup>

Currently, there is no scientific or medical evidence that proves smokeless tobacco use is an effective method to help people quit smoking. Floridians who want to quit any form of tobacco have access to the state’s free and proven-effective resources.

- **CALL:** Call Tobacco Free Florida at 1-877-U-CAN-NOW to speak with a Quit Coach® who will help you assess your addiction and help you create a personalized quit plan.
- **CLICK:** Tobacco Free Florida’s online cessation tool can be accessed at [tobaccofreeflorida.com/webcoach](http://tobaccofreeflorida.com/webcoach).
- **COME IN:** In person help is available with the help of Area Health Education Centers, find one near you at [tobaccofreeflorida.com/ahec](http://tobaccofreeflorida.com/ahec).

For more information, please visit [www.tobaccofreeflorida.com](http://www.tobaccofreeflorida.com).

## About Tobacco Free Florida

The department's Tobacco Free Florida campaign is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida's tobacco settlement fund. Tobacco users interested in quitting are encouraged to use one of the state's three ways to quit. Since 2007, more than 137,000 Floridians have successfully quit, using one of these free services. To learn more about Tobacco Free Florida and the state's free quit resources, visit [www.tobaccofreeflorida.com](http://www.tobaccofreeflorida.com) or follow the campaign on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida](https://www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida) or on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla](https://www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla).

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](https://twitter.com/HealthyFla) and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/HealthyFla). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit [www.floridahealth.gov](http://www.floridahealth.gov).

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<sup>1</sup> Florida Youth Tobacco Survey (FYTS), Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology, 2015

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization. Smokeless Tobacco and Some Tobacco-Specific N-Nitrosamines International Agency for Research on Cancer Monographs on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans Vol. 89. Lyon, (France): World Health Organization, International Agency for Research on Cancer, 2007 [accessed 2015 Feb 10].

<sup>3</sup> Boffetta, P, et al., "Smokeless tobacco and cancer," The Lancet 9:667-675, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Tomar, SL. "Chewing Tobacco Use and Dental Caries Among U.S. Men," Journal of the American Dental Association, 1999, 130: 160.

<sup>5</sup> National Cancer Institute and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Smokeless Tobacco and Public Health: A Global Perspective. Bethesda, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute. NIH Publication No. 14-7983; 2014.