

Snuff is not a safe alternative to cigarettes

by Robert Gusty

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STONY RIVER — There are many things that can damage your brain, such as alcohol and smoking and chewing.

Many other things, such as chewing tobacco, can give you mouth cancer and could do a lot more than that. For instance, it could affect your teeth and cause bad breath and discolored teeth.

Research has shown that it takes only a few months to develop mouth problems such as leukoplakia, ugly white patches or sores that develop where you place the tobacco, which can turn into cancer over time.

Snuff is not a safe alternative to smoking. It contains 10 times the amount of nitrosamines, the same cancer causing substance found in cigarettes, more than a hundred times higher than the Food and Drug Administration permits in other products.

Chewing can also lead to other health problems such as gum recession and high blood pressure. Tobacco has nicotine, and nicotine affects the heart and the rest of the circulatory system in an adverse manner. When a user is addicted to nicotine, he or she has to have a "booster" every 20 to 30 minutes while awake.

The nicotine in smokeless tobacco lifts you up first and then it lets you down. That high-low effect on your nervous system sets you up for more need of chew.

Smokeless tobacco doesn't carry the health hazard warning that cigarettes do, but it should. The advertisements are really trying to get the consumer hooked on chewing without regard for one's health.

I know a lot of people who use snuff and tobacco. Some of them are kids. Some of my friends use snuff. I told them that it could give them mouth cancer. They just ignored me.

One of my friends said he would stop, and I believed him. But, later on, I saw him chewing. I suppose the addiction is hard to overcome. They must not believe what damage it can do to them.

If you want to keep your tongue, teeth and mouth and your life, then don't chew or smoke.