

## **Through With Chew Week**

### **Who developed Through With Chew Week?**

Through With Chew Week was established in 1989 by the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, Inc.

### **What is the purpose of Through With Chew Week?**

Through With Chew Week is an educational campaign to decrease spit tobacco use and increase awareness of the negative health effects of using these products.

### **When is Through With Chew Week?**

The 2007 Through With Chew Week will be observed February 18<sup>th</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> and the Great American Spit Out is Thursday, February 22, 2007

### **What is smokeless/spit tobacco?**

There are two main types of smokeless tobacco—snuff and chewing tobacco. Snuff comes in a round tin can or is packaged in small packets that look like tea bags. It is finely ground or shredded tobacco. Typically, the user places a pinch or dip between the cheek and gum. Another variety of snuff is a fine powder that is inhaled or snorted into the nose. Chewing tobacco is available in loose leaf chew, plugs, or twist. These products come in cellophane or in a pouch.

### **What makes spit tobacco so addictive and harmful?**

All tobacco products contain nicotine, which is very addictive. The most harmful carcinogens in spit and chewing tobacco are called tobacco-specific nitrosamines. These are formed during the growing, curing, fermenting and aging of American tobacco. According to the Mayo Clinic ([www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com)), some spit tobacco products contain additives that increase the rate at which nicotine is absorbed into the body. If you look at the types of spit, chew and snuff sold in retail outlets, you will notice different products for the beginner; they are easily identified by their sweet, fruity flavors (apple, cherry, peach, etc.) and often come in easy-to-use pouches. Over time, the spit and snuff user graduates to products that contain more nicotine. Someone who has chewed for a long time uses a stronger product and uses it more frequently to receive the same effect. Check out the American Dental Association website ([www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org)) for a list of some of the cancer-causing chemicals found in spit tobacco.

### **Are spit, chew and snuff safe alternatives to cigarettes?**

No, they are not a safe alternative. U.S. Smokeless Tobacco Company (USSTC) promotes its products by claiming they are less of a health risk than smoking cigarettes. Harm reduction remains a debate among health advocates. All tobacco use is risky and may cause cancer as well as other diseases.

### **How can I get more information?**

For more information check out [www.throughwithchew.com](http://www.throughwithchew.com) or contact Allison Frey, School Tobacco Program Specialist at 410-588-5365 or [Allison.Frey@hcps.org](mailto:Allison.Frey@hcps.org)