

9 Inning Game Plan to Quit Smokeless Tobacco



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1st Inning: Decide to Quit

- Pick a day and plan to quit, you will have success if you really want to.
- Think of the negative aspects of tobacco and the positive aspects.
- Learn about why smokeless tobacco is bad for you

Tobacco is addictive, it increases your heart rate and blood pressure, and it constricts blood vessels causing poor blood circulation. This can have a negative impact on athletic performance and day to day . Smokeless tobacco also causes serious mouth problems. Bad breath and tooth discoloration are two common effects of tobacco use. Abrasion caused by the scratching of the tobacco on tooth enamel leads to increased tooth sensitivity. Sugar in the tobacco will lead to tooth decay. Gum recession at the spot of contact with the tobacco wad causes damage to the tissue and bone structure and you could loose your teeth. You can develop gingivitis, ulcers, or Leukoplakia in the gum. Oral cancer is the most serious complication and can lead to other forms of cancer. Research shows that 15-20% of all adolescent men use smokeless tobacco. Of these men, about half will develop precancerous lesions in their mouths. The chances of a smokeless user getting oral cancer are 400% greater than nonusers.

2nd Inning: Pick a Quit Date to Give Up Tobacco

- Get psyched up for quitting
- Cut back before you quit by cutting out chewing or dipping in a few of your favorite situations- or switch to a lower nicotine snuff. (Lowest-Hawken)
- Check with your doctor, dentist, or Student Health Services about nicotine replacement products and other therapies (nicotine gum, the patch, or Zyban).

Low-stress times are the best time to pick a quit date. This is when you are under the least pressure and quitting may be easier. But everyone has their own quit time - pick yours! Cutting back on tobacco use a week or two before will help you stick to your quit date. Get prepared for your quit date. Go to the store and stock up on healthy foods so you can eat well-balanced meals during the withdrawal period. Keep mouth toys around such as cinnamon or carrot sticks, hard candy or a straw. These will give you something to do if you have an urge to chew. Get a new water bottle and start drinking plenty of water. Tell your friends your intentions and ask for their support. Even better, encourage a friend who also uses tobacco to quit with you. Find ways to cope with social and emotional triggers rather than reaching for a pinch.

3rd Inning: Cut Back Before You Quit

- Taper down by cutting back to half of your usual amount before you quit.
- Don't carry your tin or pouch around with you, try leaving them behind.
- Carry substitutes like sunflower seeds, gum, candies or one of the new herbal/mint look-alikes.
- Switch to lower nicotine snuff. This will help prevent strong withdrawal when you quit.
- Manage your triggers.

Take notice of what triggers you to dip or chew. By keeping a record of your triggers and how you deal with them, you identify possible difficult situations before they occur, in fact, before you even quit! One way to monitor your tobacco use patterns before quitting is to use "Track Sheets". This can help you keep track of how often you dip/chew. On your sheet, you should write down the situation you are in (on the phone, work, on break, on the bench, etc.), how badly you feel you need that dip/chew (on a scale of 1 to 5), and your strategy for coping. If you are going to be tapering your tobacco before quitting you can use this information to eliminate low-need dips/chews. Look over your Track Sheets and pick three of your strongest triggers, then stop dipping or chewing at those times! Notice what your friends or people who don't dip or chew are doing at those times. If you can't stop all at once, go as long as you can (wait at least 10 minutes). Try to increase this time as you approach your quit day. This will give you ideas for smokeless substitutes. Remember that there is no safe way to use tobacco. The goal of cutting down or switching is to QUIT! The only health benefits come from quitting completely.

4th Inning: Get Ready for Quit Day

- The night before your quit date, get rid of all your tobacco. Be sure to check your locker, your car, your book bag - any place you may have stashed a tin or a pouch.

Stock up on substitutes. Try gum, hard candy, raisins, popcorn, cloves, carrots or cinnamon sticks, toothpicks, sunflower seeds, or non-tobacco look-alikes that contain herbs or mint. Put these in the same places you used to keep your dip or chew.

- Contact Student Health Services or 1-800-QUIT NOW if you want to get nicotine replacement products and/or Zyban. These products can ease your withdrawal reactions and help you to succeed in quitting.

Build a "Support Team"; let your family, friends, and anyone else who cares about you know you're quitting. Ask your support team to be on hand to listen and encourage you when the going gets rough. Ask them to be patient with you if you are not your usual, wonderful self for a week or two after you quit. Suggest ways for them to help, like joining you for a run or a walk and by helping you to find ways to keep busy while telling you they know you can do it! If anybody uses chew or dip, ask them not to offer you any.

They don't have to quit themselves to be supportive, but maybe someone will want to quit with you!

5th Inning: Quit Day

- Make your quit day special. Treat yourself right. You're doing something great for yourself. The first step in becoming a non tobacco user is to plan ahead and keep an action plan handy that includes your personal reasons for quitting, a list of your most common triggers, and coping techniques that work best for you. Then when things get tough, you will be able to reinforce your decision to quit dipping/chewing and "take charge" of the situation.
- Change your daily routines. This will help to break your triggers. Change the way you shower, dress, and eat breakfast. When you finish eating get right up from the table and do an activity that will keep you from reaching for that chew/dip. Brush your teeth, wash dishes, or tackle a project! Use time on the bench to take a few laps around the field.
- Make an appointment with the dentist for a checkup and cleaning. You will enjoy the fresh, clean feeling and a whiter smile. Everyday your teeth and gums will get brighter, fresher, and will be healthier.

Tobacco has three "hooks" on its users: Physical addiction, psychological dependency, and habitual behavior. Early signs of tobacco addiction: You no longer get sick or dizzy like you did when you first used dip or chew, you find yourself dipping, or chewing more often, or you've switched to stronger products. Signs of hardcore addiction: You fire in your first dip or chew early in the day, you find it hard to go more than a few hours without it, you start to feel like you need it, and you have strong cravings when you try to quit. To break this addiction all you need is a week or two off tobacco. Nicotine replacement therapy can help. There are several products including nicotine gum, nicotine patch, and nicotine nasal spray. A medication called Zyban used along with these products can help even more. This therapy helps take care of the nicotine addiction so that you can work on breaking the habit. These products are designed to reduce cravings for tobacco and relieve the withdrawal symptoms people experience while trying to quit. Research has shown that tobacco users who use some form of nicotine replacement therapy and participate in a behavior change programs can double their chances of quitting for good. You can now obtain these nicotine replacement products both with a doctor's prescription and over the counter.

6th Inning: Coping With Withdrawal during the First Week

Withdrawal symptoms don't last long and are usually strongest the first week after you quit chewing or dipping tobacco. At the end of the second week, the worst is over, by the end of the month, you will feel better than when you chewed or dipped. The best way to prevent a relapse is to be prepared for the chance of it happening. If you begin to slip back, don't worry. Many people who have quit slip back and have a chew or dip but still end up quitting for good. Most people practice quitting chewing/dipping a number of times before they quit for good. Try these steps if you are tempted:

- Treat the situation like an emergency and stop chewing/dipping immediately! Take action and get rid of the tobacco. Once you've removed yourself from the situation, look back and consider what went wrong. Where were you? What were you doing? Who were you with?
- Figure out what caused the slip and decide what you will do if it happens again. When you're ready to handle this situation the next time it happens, quit again - you're ready! Once you're back on track, set a new Quit Day.
- Make a list of coping strategies that are sure to work for you. Forget about plans that didn't work for you in the past. Try new ones. And review your list of reasons for wanting to quit. If you are tempted, think of those reasons and tell yourself that this time you are going to do it!
- **If you are tempted, try the "3 D's".**
 1. **Deep breathing** - Take 4 slow deep breaths in and out through your nose.
 2. **Doing something different** - Chew some gum, seed, or mint snuff. Take a walk; leave the scene of the urge.
 3. **Drink water** - Drink a lot of water, 8 glasses a day at least. Try chewing ice chips.
- When you have the urge to dip or chew - wait it out! The urge will go away whether or not you chew or dip. Urges usually go away in just 3 to 5 minutes. Deep breathing and exercise will help you feel better right away.
- When you are feeling irritable or tense walk away from the situation, try the "3D's", or try nicotine gum.
- If you have trouble concentrating or you feel "spacey" realize that it is part of the withdrawal and that you will be feeling better soon.
- For irregularity try adding fiber to your diet. Try fruit and fruit juices and low-calorie snacks to satisfy your desire for sweets and to curb your hunger.

7th Inning: Dealing With Triggers during the Second Week

Write down some of your triggers. And write what you'll do instead of dip or chew. It may be as simple as reaching for gum or seeds, walking away, or thinking about how far you've come.

What are your personal Cues/Triggers?

You've made it through the hardest part, the first week. If you can stay off 1 week, then you can stay off 2. Use the same strategies and willpower that have gotten you this far. Cravings may be just as strong this week but they will be less often and they will go away sooner.

Other signs of progress:

- Your circulation and skin color have improved.
- Withdrawal symptoms ease up.
- Food tastes better, your sense of smell sharpens, and your breath is fresher.
- You become more confident.
- You can breath easier with less coughing.

Be prepared for temptation

Tobacco thoughts and urges will probably bother you for a while. They will be strongest in the places you dipped or chewed the most. The more time you spend in these places without dipping or chewing, the weaker the urges will become. Know what events and places will be triggers for you and plan ahead for them. A few players describe their triggers:

- 'I get the urge when I smell the stuff or see someone doing it. I find myself reaching into my back pocket'
- 'I go without a dip all day, and once I get home I want a dip'
- 'When I get bored I used to take a dip''

Some people that have quit describe how they coped with triggers:

- 'Smelling it still triggers urges, I counter them by thinking how harmful dip can be'
- 'I still get urges from time to time when I see someone dipping, so I get up, walk off, and have a piece of gum or coffee. Out of sight, out of mind'
- 'The best thing I did to cope was to go for a run. Any physical activity helped'

8th Inning: Tips for Going the Distance

Congratulations! You've broken free of a tough addiction. If you can stay off for 2 weeks, then you can stay off forever. Keep using whatever worked when you first quit. Don't expect new rituals to take the place of smokeless ones right away. You know, it took time to get used to chewing or dipping at first too. Keep up your guard. Continue to plan ahead for situations that may catch you off guard. Try not to slip, not even once, but if you do slip, get right back on base.

- Don't let feelings of guilt lead you back to chewing or dipping. A slip does not mean failure. Think about it as a learning opportunity to improve your quit plan
- Figure out why you slipped and how to avoid it next time
- Get rid of any leftover tobacco
- Pick up right where you left off before the slip

If slips are frequent, or you are dipping or chewing on a regular basis, make a new quitting plan. Quitting takes practice. The smokeless habit can be tough to beat. Most people don't quit for good on the first try. Don't give up! Figure out what would have helped. Try a new approach next time. Reach out to others for help and assistance.

9th Inning: Celebrate Your Success

Congratulations! You've done it. You've beaten the smokeless habit. You're improving your health and the health of the people around you. The rewards that come with quitting will make you a healthier and happier person. Celebrate with the people on your "support team". Offer your support to friends and teammates who are trying to quit.

Reward Yourself

Rewarding yourself helps to reinforce your decision to beat the smokeless habit. Give yourself a reward for every milestone in your new life free from tobacco. Rewards don't have to cost much to be special, they can even be free! Rewards can be anything you like or care about. People who reward themselves for quitting are more likely to succeed in quitting. Here are some examples:

- Buy some music, a video game, or magazine.
- Go to the salon for a new hairstyle or a new look.
- Buy new shoes for running/walking or buy exercise equipment.
- Call an old friend or family member.
- Get tickets for a great concert or sporting event.
- Spend extra time on your favorite hobby.
- Go to the movies or rent an old favorite.
- Go out to a great restaurant and eat a special meal or have a treat.

SOURCE: <http://www.gmu.edu/student/quitsmoking/smokelesscessation.html>