

# SPIT TOBACCO

Some baseball players and other athletes use chew tobacco because it contains nicotine, a potent stimulant that may make them more alert (**BUT** at great risk to their health and overall athletic ability).

**You can take in far more nicotine by chewing tobacco than by smoking it.** The linings of your lungs are so expansive and their absorption of nicotine so complete that 8 seconds after you inhale the smoke from a cigarette, almost all the nicotine is inside your brain. The nicotine passes from your lungs into your bloodstream where it travels directly to your brain without being diluted by blood from the rest of your body. You get so much nicotine in one “drag” that if you don’t wait before inhaling again, the additional nicotine that arrives in your already nicotine-filled brain makes you feel sick.

**When you chew tobacco**, however, **the nicotine is absorbed gradually and continuously through the tissue in the lining of your mouth.** It then travels back to the heart and is diluted by blood from the rest of the body before it reaches the brain. So you can take in much large doses of what is essentially a poisonous substance without suffering the side effects of nausea and headache. **BUT**, nicotine is a highly addictive substance. Once addicted, a person feels compelled to use tobacco just to feel “comfortable”. The results:

- ☞ increase in heart rate and blood pressure
- ☞ increase risk for:
  - Heart and brain attack
  - Cancer of the mouth, throat, larynx and nasal cavity
- ☞ excretion of extra saliva (YUCK!)



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Source: Oakland County Health Division, July 1998