

Smokeless Tobacco Candy-coating carcinogens.

Tobacco companies are successfully targeting kids with candy-flavoured chewing tobacco.

Not long ago, chewing tobacco was common only in rural western communities. Today it is spreading more and more to high schools and team sports' locker rooms.

The use of chewing tobacco by teenagers and young adults comes on the heels of the recent introduction of products that are designed to appeal to young people.

Tobacco companies have launched a variety of chewing tobacco brands in fruit and candy flavourings. These flavours increase the number of kids who try such products. They mask the unpleasant taste of tobacco and make it easier for kids to use, and become addicted.

Candy-flavouring has increased the use of chewing tobacco in Canada.

Since the 2005, around the time flavoured chew tobacco was more aggressively marketed, consumption of chewing tobacco in Canada has risen, reversing a steady 17 year decline dating back to 1998.¹

In 2006, the National Smokeless Tobacco Company announced that 7 of the top 10 best selling smokeless products were flavoured and boasted that their business had grown thanks to new flavours and pouched oral tobacco.² Between 1990 and 2005, sales grew by 50%.³

“Cherry Skoal is for somebody who likes the taste of candy, if you know what I’m saying.”⁴

UST Salesman explains the use of flavour



Same look. Same flavours.

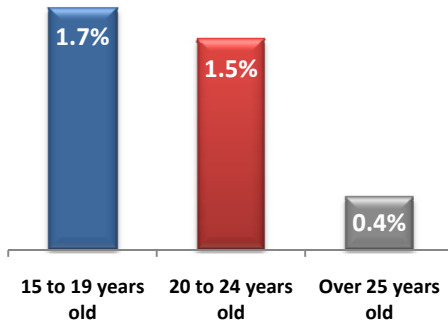
Addictive and deadly tobacco is packaged to look like chewing gum.



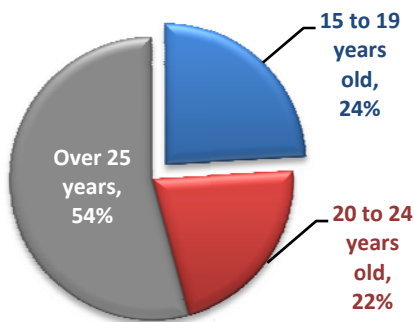
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Prevalence of Smokeless Tobacco Use by Age, Canada 2007

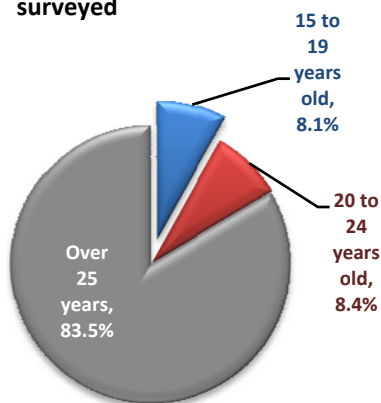


One quarter of recent smokeless users are children under 19.



smokeless users

Even though they make up only one-twelfth of those surveyed



surveyed population

Smokeless tobacco is already a major problem in some parts of Canada, and the situation is getting worse.

In some parts of Canada, smokeless use is as widespread a problem as smoking. In Northwest Ontario, almost 1 in 5 high school aged boys uses smokeless tobacco (17%) – equal to smoking rates in that region.^{5,6}

Almost half of the teenagers who have ever tried or who are recent users of chewing tobacco, do not smoke cigarettes (a quarter have never even smoked one cigarette).⁷

After a similar introduction of flavoured smokeless in the United States, there was a 30 percent increase in use among high-school aged boys (even though adult use remained stable).⁸

Kids are the target

Smokeless use is much more common among teenagers and young adults than it is among the general population. 15 to 19 year olds represent **one quarter of all smokeless tobacco users**, even though they are less than 7% of the Canadian population and only 8% of those whose tobacco use is surveyed.

Teenagers are at **THREE TIMES THE RISK** of having used smokeless in the past month as are Canadians over 25 years of age.

About 40,000 Canadian children under the age of 19 report using smokeless tobacco in the past month.⁹

Smokeless tobacco seriously harms health

Health Canada warns against the use of all tobacco products, including oral tobacco,¹⁰ and cautions that these products:

- Are addictive.
- Contain 28 known carcinogens. The leukoplakia (white, leathery sores) caused by smokeless can lead to cancers of the mouth and throat.
- Affect the circulatory system, increasing heart rate and blood pressure, as well as constricting blood vessels.
- Cause tooth and gum disease.

Many governments have gone even further and have banned smokeless altogether.

Smokeless products like chew are already completely banned in, Australia, Israel, Japan, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, Singapore and the European Union (except Sweden).¹¹

References

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