



Smoke-less, Spit-less Tobacco: “SNUS”

TOBACCO + SWEET FLAVORS + DECEPTIVE PACKING = A DANGEROUS PRODUCT

What is SNUS?

SNUS, pronounced like “loose” is a smokeless, spit-less tobacco product wrapped inside a fleece pouch, which looks like a tiny teabag the size of a stick of gum. The pouch is placed inside the mouth, between the lips and the gums for a quick nicotine fix. This new tobacco product comes in flavors like peppermint and spearmint and is usually sold in small tins or packets. It is sometimes sold refrigerated to “ensure freshness” of the product. Each tin of Camel SNUS has 15 pouches. These pouches are supposed to last up to 30 minutes in which time the nicotine can be absorbed into the bloodstream.

Marketing SNUS

Snus is typically marketed as an “alternative” tobacco product for those who find traditional chewing tobacco repulsive and as way to get your nicotine fix in places where cigarette smoking is banned. With many cities around the country adopting strong smoke-free ordinances, the tobacco industry has cleverly found a way to keep from losing business. The American versions of this product may not eliminate the urge to smoke, and it has been speculated that they are intended to sustain a cigarette smoking habit, while fostering a second tobacco habit simultaneously.

What is alarming about the marketing tactics for SNUS is:

- the enticing flavors - it smells more like a stick of spearmint gum rather than tobacco
- the cheaper prices – it is not taxed at the rate of cigarettes
- the deceptive packaging – small and easily concealed, often mistaken by those who don’t know what it is as candy or gum

Health Risks of SNUS

American SNUS is modeled after the Swedish version which has been around for centuries. The American tobacco companies discovered the product about 5 years ago and started making their own version with American consumers in mind. The exact amount of nicotine in American SNUS is not known because tobacco companies are not required by the FDA to disclose the information. Much like traditional chewing tobacco, SNUS can cause cancer of the mouth, tooth decay, gum disease and other oral problems. A University of Minnesota study reported lower levels of nitrosamines, the harmful carcinogenic that worries public health officials, but it does contain at least as much nicotine as cigarettes. In Sweden, studies show that certain cancers associated with smoking cigarettes, such as lung cancer, are not increased by using SNUS products. However, the studies did show an increased risk of pancreatic cancer.

Youth and SNUS

The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids raises the concern that products like SNUS are appealing to youth. They come in a variety of sweet flavors, are packaged like gum or mints, and are very easy to conceal from adults. The Marlboro Snus packages resemble Dentyne gum packs, and the Camel Snus tins are similar in shape and size to a small cell phone. When these products are placed in a pocket or backpack it is hard to tell the difference. They are also a cheaper alternative to cigarettes, and lower prices are always attractive to youth. These youth-friendly, addictive nicotine products have public health officials worried that a new generation of tobacco users is being created.

Tobacco Products or Candy? Who are they really marketing to...?



**For more information contact The Coalition at 936-634-9308 or visit
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