

Tobacco Facts: Smokeless Tobacco



Smokeless tobacco (SLT) use is harmful and persistent in Alaska. Men, Alaska Native adolescents and adults, and Alaskans living in the Yukon-Kuskokwim (Y-K) Delta region are at highest risk for SLT use. Effective programs and policies can keep adolescents from starting and help users quit.

What is SLT?

SLT is tobacco that is not burned. It also is called chew or chewing tobacco, spit or spitting tobacco, dip, and snuff. SLT comes in cans; pouches or packets; and as dissolvable lozenges, sticks, strips or orbs.¹

SLT is not a safe alternative to smoking

⊖ SLT use:

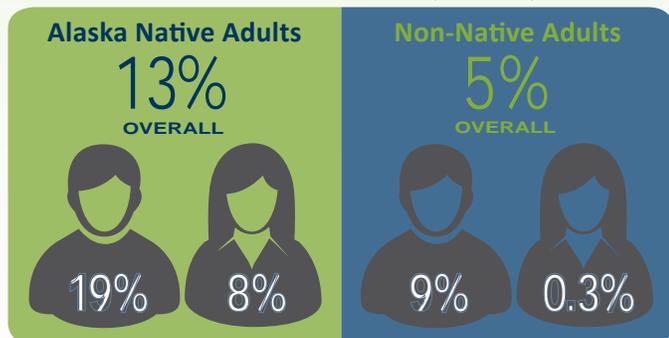
- is a known cause of cancer of the mouth and gum,² and is linked to health problems in the mouth, like gum disease and tooth loss;³
- is linked to cancers of the head and neck,⁴ esophagus, stomach and pancreas;⁵
- increases the risk of cardiovascular diseases,⁴ including increased risk of dying from coronary heart disease.⁶
- Adolescents who use SLT also are more likely to progress to cigarette smoking.⁷
- SLT contains nicotine, an addictive drug.⁸



SLT use is highest among men and Alaska Native people

⊖ Alaska Native adults are significantly more likely than non-Native adults to use SLT, and Alaska Native men are more likely than Alaska Native women to use SLT.

Adult Smokeless Tobacco Use, Alaska, 2015



Data Source: Alaska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

⊖ In Alaska overall, adult use of SLT has not changed significantly from 1996 to 2015, ranging from 4% to 7%.

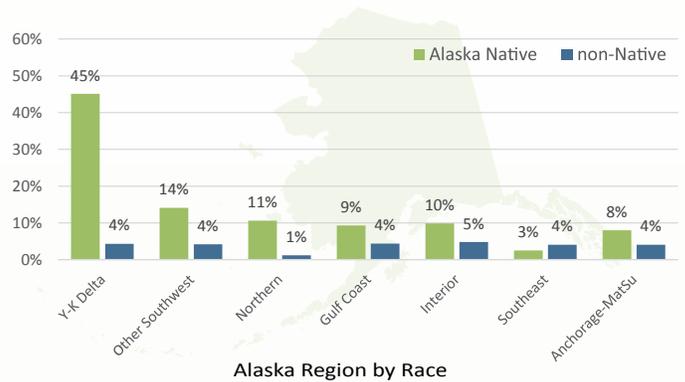
Alaska adult use of SLT in 2015 was **7%**
& **10%** was the adolescent SLT use rate.

Place Matters

⊖ SLT use is highest in the Yukon-Kuskokwim (Y-K) Delta region, where.

- Alaska Native people make up more than 75% of the population.
- 45% of Alaska Native adults report SLT use.

Adult SLT Use in Alaska, 2013-2015

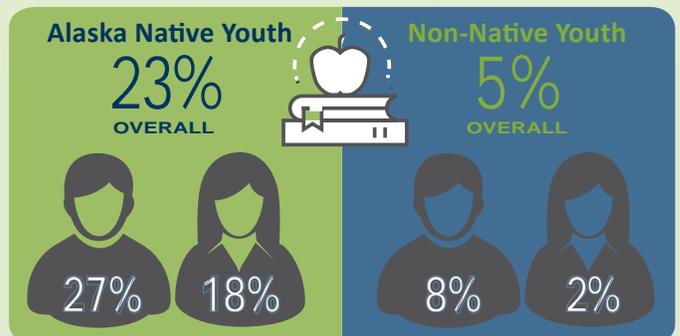


Data Source: Alaska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

Use is higher among adolescents than adults, but the patterns of use are similar.

- Among non-Native adolescent boys are more likely to use SLT than girls. Alaska Native use is higher than non-Native use among both boys and girls.
- Adolescent SLT use has decreased nationally and also among non-Native adolescents in Alaska (from 14.5% in 1995 to 5.1% in 2013-15), but has not changed among Alaska Native adolescents.
- In Alaska, adolescent SLT use is as prevalent as cigarette smoking (10.4% and 10.8% respectively, AK YRBS 2013-2015).

Adolescent SLT Use, Alaska, 2013-2015



Data Source: Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey

What can we do?

Healthcare providers:¹⁰



- Ask, advise, and refer all patients, at every visit, to appropriate cessation services.
- Take the Brief Tobacco Intervention training on Ask, Advise and Refer. Continuing education credits are available here: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/Tobacco/TobaccoFreeAlaska/treatment.aspx>
- Clarify with patients that SLT is not a safe alternative to smoking.
- Discourage using SLT to quit smoking and encourage proven cessation methods.

Community partners and public health professionals:



- Consider increasing the price of SLT. Price increases can decrease the number of people using tobacco, reduce the amount of tobacco consumed, and prevent young people from starting to use tobacco.
- Include SLT in tobacco-free policies in schools, workplaces, and other public places.
- Include SLT as part of tobacco prevention public education messaging for high use groups, such as Alaska Native people and Y-K communities.
- Ensure SLT cessation is included alongside smoking cessation in employee wellness programs. Within Alaska's health systems, develop or tailor tobacco cessation programs for community health aides and practitioners.

Individuals:



- Support tobacco-free policies that include SLT in schools, workplaces, and other public places.
- If you, a friend or family member use any form of tobacco:
 - Ask your provider for tools and resources to help quit.
 - Enroll with Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line to get help quitting tobacco: www.alaskaquitline.com

ALASKA'S
TOBACCO
QUIT LINE
1-800-QUIT-NOW

(1-800-784-8669)



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Alaska Resources:



Learn more about tobacco prevention:

- **Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control Program:** www.dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/Tobacco/
- **Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line:** www.alaskaquitline.com
- **Tobacco-Free Alaska:** www.tobaccofree.alaska.gov

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