



Tobacco Use and Oral Health

Individuals who use tobacco are four times more likely than people who have never used tobacco to have advanced gum (periodontal) disease. Continued use of tobacco affects teeth and gums and can lead to tooth decay, tooth loss and oral cancer. Oral cancer kills one individual in the United States every hour of every day. Drinking alcohol, in addition to using tobacco, increases the likelihood of oral cancer even further. Men are diagnosed with oral cancer more than twice as often as women.

How Smokeless Tobacco Affects Your Oral Health:

- Increases the risk of developing leukoplakia, visible as a white patch on the inside of the mouth that does not rub off and is at risk for developing cancer.
- Causes gums to recede due to the irritation of tobacco in your mouth.
- Increases the incidence of bad breath and the risk of developing cavities.
- Causes erosion of the enamel that protects your teeth.

How Smoking Affects Your Oral Health:

- Increases the likelihood of halitosis (bad breath) and stained teeth.
- Increases the buildup of plaque and tartar on your teeth.
- Increases risk of developing gum disease and the loss of bone that supports the teeth, which leads to tooth loss.
- Delays healing from tooth extraction, gum treatment or oral surgery.
- Cigar and pipe smoking can have the same adverse effects on oral health as cigarette smoking.
- Suppresses the immune system's response to oral infection.



“ Along with a variety of other health benefits, avoiding tobacco is key to maintaining oral health. Tobacco use increases risk of dental decay, gum disease and oral cancer. Maternal use of tobacco, along with genetic and other factors, increases risk for oral clefts. Please encourage your patients to contact Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line. ”

— Brad Whistler, DMD, Dental Official, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Oral Health Program

Tips to Help You Quit

Why Should I Quit?

- The risk for heart disease is cut in half one year after quitting tobacco.
- Five years after quitting tobacco your risk for cancer of the mouth, throat and esophagus are cut in half.
- Quitting tobacco will improve the health and appearance of your mouth, gums and teeth.
- Some people recover a better sense of smell and taste after they quit.

How Do I Quit?

- Call Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line! The quit line is FREE for all Alaskans. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Quit line services include phone coaching sessions and free nicotine replacement therapy.
- Get support from friends and family. Ask Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line to send you the *Ally Guide*.
- Contact your healthcare provider to find the help you need to quit.
- Keep trying to quit! Most tobacco users make several quit attempts before staying quit for good.

“ I thought it was going to be hard, but with the tips from you guys, and the patch, and the conversations with you guys... Even when I'm at work, which used to be a big obstacle for me, I don't have any cravings. Even being around other smokers doesn't bother me anymore. **”**

— Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line Caller

ALASKA'S
TOBACCO
QUIT LINE
1-800-QUIT-NOW
IT'S FREE. IT'S CONFIDENTIAL. AND IT WORKS.

For more information, visit alaskaquitline.com

