Tobacco: Unfiltered Facts

Tobacco use in any form—cigarette, cigar, pipe and smokeless (spit) tobacco—increases the risk for a variety of oral health conditions including:

**Periodontal (gum) disease:** Studies show that tobacco use may be one of the most significant risk factors in the development and progression of gum disease.\(^1\) In fact, smoking may play a significant role in more than 50 percent of chronic periodontal disease cases.\(^1\)

**Tooth decay, bad breath and stained teeth:** Despite good oral health habits, tobacco use is still more likely to cause cavities due to decreased saliva flow, increased plaque and tartar buildup and a greater pH level in the mouth. Beyond the medical risks, bad breath and stained teeth are other negative effects of smoking.

**Tooth loss:** Smokers are about twice as likely to lose their teeth as nonsmokers.\(^2,3\) Smoking can restrict blood flow to the gum tissues, limiting delivery of nutrients necessary for the bone and gum support of teeth.

**Oral cancer:** Of the more than 48,000 Americans diagnosed with oral cancer annually, only 64 percent live past the five-year survival milestone.\(^4\) Tobacco use increases oral cancer risk, and those who use tobacco and consume excessive alcohol have an especially high risk.\(^5\)

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**Did you know?**

There are 28 or more cancer-causing agents in just smokeless tobacco alone.\(^6\)
Quick bites

More tobacco-related health risks:  

• Cancers including: bladder, esophageal, laryngeal, lung, throat, cervical, kidney, stomach and pancreatic
• Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) including chronic bronchitis and emphysema
• Coronary heart disease
• Stroke
• Abdominal aortic aneurysm
• Acute myeloid leukemia
• Cataracts
• Pneumonia

Discuss your concerns about tobacco use and its impact on your oral and overall health with your dentist and doctor.

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