

Did you know that tobacco use is one of the most significant risk factors for gum disease?¹

Tobacco use has visible – and invisible – effects²

Many tobacco users already experience the visible and obvious effects of smoking: receding gums, decreased sense of taste and/or smell, chronic bad breath and stained and/or loose teeth. However, few understand that more serious, harmful effects exist that may not be seen or felt.

Every year, more than 35,000 individuals in the United States are diagnosed with oral and throat (pharynx) cancers. And every year, more than 8,000 of those individuals die from these types of cancers. Since the majority of oral and throat cancers are tobacco-related, many of those cases could be prevented if more people quit smoking cigarettes, pipes, cigars and related products, and quit using smokeless tobacco.³

Tobacco and your oral health

Tobacco ingredients make the gum tissue more fibrous, masking these signs, so smokers are less likely to realize that they may have a problem. Gum disease, in turn, leads to increased tooth loss. This connection is critical since gum disease has been linked to other health issues such as pre-term birth, diabetes complications, heart attack or stroke, osteoporosis and even pancreatic cancer.

Smokers may also be poor candidates for certain dental treatments such as implants.⁵ And, smokers don't heal as quickly after extractions and gum surgery. While smokers should still have oral surgery when needed, results are better if the smoker quits.

Tobacco use in America

- Approximately one in every four U.S. adults currently smokes. Another one in four has used tobacco in the past.⁶
- While overall tobacco use is divided fairly equally between men and women⁶, 92% of smokeless tobacco users are male⁷
- Approximately 3,000 children and adolescents become regular tobacco users every day.⁶



Myth Busters

The 2004 Surgeon General's Report, "The Health Consequences of Smoking" reports these vital findings⁴:

- Research indicates the causal relationship between smoking and gum disease and oral cancers.
- Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body, causing many diseases and weakening a smoker's health in general.
- Smoking so-called "low-tar" or low-nicotine cigarettes offers no apparent health benefit.
- The following have been added to the list of diseases caused by smoking: abdominal aortic aneurysm, acute myeloid leukemia, cataract, cervical cancer, pancreatic cancer, kidney cancer, pneumonia, periodontitis, and stomach cancer.

In 2006, the Surgeon general also announced these conclusions about **second-hand smoke**:¹

- Second-hand smoke causes premature death and disease in children and in adults who do not smoke.
- The scientific evidence shows that there is no "safe" level of exposure to second-hand smoke.

No type of tobacco is “safe”

Cigarettes, pipes, cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff, and other types of tobacco each present their own unique risks to your oral and overall health.

Smokeless tobacco products, like cigarettes, contain a variety of toxins associated with cancer. In fact, at least 28 cancer-causing chemicals have been identified in smokeless tobacco products. These toxins and chemicals can cause cancers of the mouth, lip, tongue, and pancreas. If you swallow the juice created by using it, you may ingest toxins that may increase your risk for cancer of the voice box, esophagus, colon and bladder.⁵

When it comes to tobacco use, it's good to be a quitter

Becoming an ex-smoker lowers your chances of having a heart attack, stroke or cancer, including oral cancer. A smoke-free environment is also healthier for those around you. If you're pregnant, tobacco cessation improves your chances of having a healthy baby. Even your wallet will benefit since the money spent on tobacco can be used on other things.⁵

Smokeless tobacco can also irritate your gum tissue, causing gum disease. Sugar is often added to enhance the flavor of smokeless tobacco, increasing your risk for tooth decay. And, since most smokeless tobacco contains sand and grit, it can wear down your teeth.⁵

Not even cigars offer a safe alternative to cigarettes. Whether inhaled or not, cigar smoke increases your risk for oral and throat cancers, as well as gum disease. Like cigarette smoke, cigar smoke can cause staining of the teeth and tongue, as well as bad breath.⁵

When you quit, your body begins healing within *minutes* of your last cigarette. Within only 48 hours, nerve endings in your nose and mouth start to grow again. Within just a few years (five to ten), pre-cancerous cells in your body are replaced with normal cells, which may significantly reduce your risk of cancers such as lung, mouth, voice box, esophagus, bladder, kidney and pancreas.⁶

Reach for a life without tobacco!

www.cigna.com



Some Healthy Rewards programs are not available in all states. If your CIGNA plan includes coverage for any of these services, this program is in addition to, not instead of, your plan coverage. **A discount program is NOT insurance, and you must pay the entire discounted charge.** ¹American Cancer Society, www.cancer.org. ²Surgeon General's Report: Oral Health in America, 2000. ³American Cancer Society ⁴U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General, 2004. ⁵American Dental Association, www.ada.org. ⁶U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Reducing Tobacco Use: A Report of the Surgeon General, Atlanta, Georgia. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention, Office of Smoking and Health, 2000. ⁷1997 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse. "CIGNA Dental" refers to the following operating subsidiaries of CIGNA Corporation: **Connecticut General Life Insurance Company**, and CIGNA Dental Health, Inc. and its operating subsidiaries and affiliates. This document is provided by CIGNA solely for informational purposes to promote consumer health. It does not constitute medical advice and is not intended to be a substitute for proper dental care provided by a dentist. CIGNA assumes no responsibility for any circumstances arising out of the use, misuse, interpretation or application of any information supplied in this document. Always consult with your doctor for appropriate examinations, treatment, testing, and care recommendations. 11/10 ©2010 CIGNA