



Here at Conway Oral Healthcare, we believe that superior oral health takes effort and teamwork. We believe in cooperation between doctor and patient, to ensure that we are not only caring for our patients in the best way possible, but educating them as well.

Tobacco Use and Oral Health

Tobacco products damage your gum tissue by affecting the attachment of bone and soft tissue to your teeth. An example of the effect is receding gums. A receding gum line exposes the tooth roots and increases your risk of developing a sensitivity to hot and cold, or tooth decay in these unprotected areas.

Like cigarettes, smokeless tobacco products contain a variety of toxins associated with cancer. At least 28 cancer-causing chemicals have been identified in smokeless tobacco products. Smokeless tobacco is known to cause cancers of the mouth, lip, tongue, and pancreas. Users also may be at risk for cancer of the voice box, esophagus, colon and bladder, because they swallow some of the toxins in the juice created by using smokeless tobacco. Smokeless tobacco can irritate your gum tissue, causing periodontal (gum) disease. Sugar is often added to enhance the flavor of smokeless tobacco, increasing the risk for tooth decay. Smokeless tobacco also typically contains sand and grit, which can wear down your teeth.

Signs of oral cancer include:

- Irritation, like tenderness, burning or a sore that will not heal
- Pain, tenderness or numbness anywhere in the mouth or lips
- Development of a lump, or a leathery, wrinkled, or bumpy patch inside your mouth
- Color changes to your oral soft tissues (gray, red, or white spots or patches), rather than a healthy pink color
- Difficulty chewing, swallowing, speaking or moving the jaw or tongue
- Any change in the way your teeth fit together

To quit using tobacco, try any of these various methods:

- Set a date to quit and stick to it. Choose a “low stress” time to quit
- Enlist the support of your family, friends and co workers
- Ask your dentist or physician about nicotine replacement therapy for use in cessation attempts. Using these medicines can double your chances of quitting for good.
- Remove tobacco and tobacco paraphernalia from your home office and car
- Seek tobacco free environments to curve your temptations
- When you crave tobacco, exercise the 4 D's:
 - ⇒ Delay—craving will pass in 5-10 minutes
 - ⇒ Drink water—it will help to wash the toxins from your body
 - ⇒ Do something else—distract yourself by being active
 - ⇒ Deep breathing—deep inhalations and exhalations are relaxing
- **Call 1-800-QUITNOW or go to www.smokefree.gov for help**