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## Coalition aims to cut smokeless tobacco use

What would it take for you to quit chewing smokeless tobacco? Many believe smokeless tobacco is a safe alternative to cigarettes, but it can cause cancer of the mouth, esophagus and pancreas and contains up to four times the highly addictive nicotine found in cigarettes.

During Through With Chew Week, Feb. 15-21, the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline and the Tobacco-Free Cleveland County Coalition aim to reduce the use of smokeless tobacco in Oklahoma with free quit coaching.

“Quit Coaches at the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline are specially trained to provide smokeless tobacco users with personalized quit plans to help you quit for good,” said Jason, Quit Coach for the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline. “We are there for you 24/7 to provide nonjudgmental support throughout your quitting journey.”

According to the 2014 Surgeon General’s Report, smokeless tobacco use has increased steadily since 2004. Several contributing factors include increased advertising by the tobacco industry, the introduction of a wide variety of new smokeless products and flavors at low price points, and marketing messages intended to specifically appeal to current or former smokers.

### Smokeless Facts:

- What harm can dipping cause to your mouth?
    - Smokeless tobacco use may cause cancer of the mouth.
    - Sugar in smokeless tobacco may cause decay in exposed tooth roots.
    - Dip and chew can cause gums to pull away from the teeth where tobacco is held. The gums do not grow back.
    - Leathery white patches and red sores are common and can turn into cancer.
  - Why is smokeless tobacco addictive?
    - Nicotine, found in all tobacco products, is a highly addictive drug that acts in the brain and throughout the body.
    - Dip and chew contain more nicotine than cigarettes.
    - Holding an average-size dip in your mouth for 30 minutes give as much nicotine as smoking three cigarettes.
- Someone who dips two cans a week get as much or more nicotine as a pack-a-day smoker.