

Feb. 7, 2014



## When it comes to tobacco use, smokeless does not mean harmless

SARASOTA COUNTY — Tobacco products such as chew, dip and snuff are not harmless; however, they are smokeless so many youth and adults underestimate the serious health risks associated with these products. The Tobacco Free Partnership of Sarasota County, including Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT), wants to highlight the dangers associated with smokeless tobacco products and encourage users to quit during “Through with Chew Week,” Feb. 16-22.

According to “The Smokeless Tobacco Outreach and Prevention (STOP) Guide – A Comprehensive Directory of Smokeless Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Resources,” smokeless tobacco products, like cigarettes, contain nicotine, a highly addictive and dangerous chemical. Health officials say that constant exposure to tobacco juices from these smokeless products can cause oral cancers, which can form within just five years of regular use, and can cause cancer of the esophagus, pharynx, larynx, stomach and pancreas.



Unlike cigarettes, smokeless tobacco products, such as chew, dip and snuff are produced in flavors to mask their harsh taste, including cherry, apple and mint. Flavored tobacco products are frequently thought of as starter products used by youth, and can lead to lifelong nicotine addiction. SWAT groups work on educating their peers on the dangers of smokeless and other tobacco products in clubs throughout Sarasota County.

The Tobacco Free Partnership of Sarasota County and Sarasota County’s SWAT Chapter will be observing Through with Chew Week. The public is encouraged to help work toward creating a tobacco-free future by getting involved and attending the bi-monthly partnership meeting to be held Thursday, Feb. 20, 10- 11:30 a.m. at HealthFit powered by Sarasota Memorial Hospital, 5880 Rand Blvd., in Sarasota.

To learn more about creating a Tobacco Free Florida or for free help overcoming the addiction to nicotine, go online to [tobaccofreeflorida.com](http://tobaccofreeflorida.com). More information about smokeless tobacco products can also be found at [SmokelessKills.com](http://SmokelessKills.com).

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