

Oral Disease & Tobacco Use in Colorado A Fact Sheet



What is the Problem?

- Tobacco use is a known risk factor for gum disease and other oral diseases such as oral cancer.
- Tobacco use is one of the most significant risk factors in the development and progression of gum disease.
- The chemicals in tobacco can slow down the healing process and make treatment of gum disease less successful.
- Tobacco users are more likely to have oral cancer, bad breath, stained teeth, tooth loss, bone loss, loss of taste, gum recession, mouth sores and wrinkles

The teeth may eventually become loose and have to be removed because of gum disease.

Chewing Tobacco

- There are two types of smokeless tobacco; chew and snuff.
- Health and social concerns with smokeless tobacco use include chronic bad breath, yellowing of the teeth, tooth abrasion, tooth decay, tooth loss, gum disease, gum recession and the loss of bone in the jaw. ⁵
- Smokeless tobacco is associated with leukoplakia, oral cancer, decay and gum disease.

What is the Oral Health Program Doing?

- The Oral Health Program works with the State Tobacco Education and Prevention Program.
- “Tobacco Use Cessation Tools for Oral Health Providers” is a tool kit that was developed through this partnership.
- The program also encourages dental care providers to practice the “Ask, Advise, and Refer” skills to encourage their patients to quit using tobacco products.



... the gums may shrink away from the teeth making them look longer. Without treatment, the teeth may become loose, painful and even fall out.

What is gum Disease? ¹

- Gum diseases range from simple gum inflammation to serious diseases that result in major damage to the soft tissue and bone that support the teeth.
- The gums pull away from the teeth and form pockets that are infected.
- The body’s enzymes fighting the infection actually start to break down the bone and tissue that hold the teeth in place.
- If not treated, the bones, gums and connective tissue that support the teeth are destroyed.

Tobacco Use in Colorado

- 18.5 percent of Colorado’s adult residents currently smoke, which is less than the 22 percent nationally. ^{2,3}
- More than 25 percent of Colorado students in grades 9-12 reported smoking in the past month, and many had their first cigarette before they were 10 years old. ⁴
- The highest prevalence is among 18-24 year olds, of which 22.5 percent smoke, lower than the national figure of 28.5 percent. ^{2,3}

References:

1. National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research. Retrieved December 30, 2005 from <http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/HealthInformation/DiseasesAndConditions/GumPeriodontalDiseases/PeriodontalDiseases.htm>
2. MMWR—Cigarette Smoking Among Adults—United States, 2002. May 28, 2004/ Vol. 3/ No. 20.
3. State of Colorado Child Health Plan (CHP+) Dental Plan Analysis: February 1, 2002—January 31, 2003. Executive Summary. October 28, 2003.
4. Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, State Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership, Tobacco Use in Colorado, 2001.
5. American Cancer Society, *Smokeless tobacco: Highly addictive and no safer than smoking*. Retrieved December 28, 2004 from <http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/>

