Every year, more than 40,000 people in the U.S. are diagnosed with oral and throat (pharynx) cancers, 7,850 of which die from these types of cancers. Since the majority (80%) 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.2

**Wreaking havoc on your teeth and gums**

Tobacco ingredients make the gum tissue more fibrous, masking the signs of gum disease. Gum disease can lead to increased tooth loss, but more importantly, it may lead to healthy pregnancy issues and complications with diabetes, heart attack or stroke, osteoporosis and even pancreatic cancer.

Smokers may also be poor candidates for certain dental treatments such as implants.3 And, smokers usually 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 America4**

- Approximately one in every five U.S. adults currently smokes. Another one in four has used tobacco in the past.1
- While overall tobacco use is divided fairly equally between men and women, 92% of smokeless tobacco users are male.5
- Approximately 3,000 children and adolescents become regular tobacco users every day.4

**The cold hard health facts4**

- 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.
The dangers of second-hand smoke

- 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 tobacco is “safe”

Cigarettes, pipes, cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff and other types of tobacco are detrimental to your oral and overall health.

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

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.

It’s good to be a quitter

Quitting can be good for your health — it lowers your chances of having a heart attack, stroke or cancer, including oral cancer.

- Your body begins healing within minutes of your last cigarette.
- 20 minutes after quitting, your heart rate and blood pressure drop.
- 12 hours after quitting, the carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.
- 2 weeks to 3 months after quitting, your circulation improves and your lung function increases.
- 1 year after quitting, the excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a continuing smoker’s.
- 5 years after quitting, risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus and bladder are cut in half. Cervical cancer risk falls to that of a non-smoker. Stroke risk can fall to that of a non-smoker after 2-5 years.

Ready to kick the habit? We’re behind you all the way.

Take advantage of these free resources for help, information and referrals to help you kick the habit:

- The Department of Health and Human Services web site: www.smokefree.gov
- The National Network of Tobacco Cessation Quitline: 1-800-QUITNOW (1-800-784-8669).

Callers are routed to a state-run quitline if available in their area. If there is no state-run quitline, callers are routed to the National Cancer Institute (NCI) quitline.