



Photo by Natasha Kavanaugh

1A state champion Siletz Warriors boys basketball team members Chris Garza and Austin Lancaster and Coach Mike Fisher ride through the Loyalty Days parade in Newport, Ore. Bob Line, principal at Siletz Valley School, drove the truck with a banner reading "SVS says thanks to Siletz Tribe" and towed several students in a flatbed trailer who rode along in support of Siletz Valley Schools.

Please contact the **Siletz Community Dental Clinic** if you experience dental pain or a dental emergency. The staff will do everything possible to see you as soon as reasonably possible.

Because of high volume, check-in time is Monday-Thursday from 8:30-9 a.m. and Friday from 10-10:30 a.m. Afternoon check-in time is Monday-Friday from 1-1:30 p.m.

Tooth Talk: Nicotine and oral cancer can come from several sources

By Mary Ellen Volansky, RDH, MS

Which of the following is not a name for chewing tobacco – scrap, guy, chowers, flab, chits, chawsky?

OK, I had a personal stake in placing the last one on this list. Now, which do you think is not a name for chewing tobacco? Read on.

Chewing tobacco is one of the oldest methods of consuming tobacco. American Indians of both North and South America chewed the leaves of the tobacco plant. Frequently, the tobacco was mixed with the mineral lime, which was added to enhance the effect on the chewer.

Chewing tobacco was prevalent until the 20th century when it was overtaken by cigarette smoking.¹ This advancement led to increased addiction to tobacco and increased lung and oral cancers – those with a 30 percent survival rate² – and a greater risk of periodontal disease and tooth loss.

Marissa Esposito, a dental hygiene student at the Lincoln College of New England, provided the following statistic in an article she wrote for the April 2011 issue of the American Dental Hygienists' Association magazine, *Access*: In the U.S., oral cancer is the most commonly diagnosed form of cancer, with over 30,000 patients presenting each year.³

She went on to address other aspects of oral cancer incidence in the United States: 1) Oral cancer is responsible for over 8,000 deaths annually;⁴ 2) The high incidence of death is related to lack of early detection; 3) When diagnosed early, the survival rate is more than 90 percent.⁵

Early detection

The main focus of Esposito's article was early detection. Please be aware that we at the Siletz Dental Clinic provide oral cancer screenings. With every exam and recall visit, you will receive an oral cancer screening. This has been standard practice in dentistry in general and specifically at this clinic.

If you would like an oral cancer screening, just ask. We also will provide

them at the Health Fair on June 29 from 3:30-6:30 p.m. (See page 7.)

28 cancer-causing ingredients

There are 28 cancer-causing agents in chewing tobacco and snuff.⁶ Those chemicals cause changes to the cells they touch. Those cellular changes are pre-cancerous and generally have the following appearance: whitish roughness and grooves, later changing to irregular folds with varying depths with a surface coloring that is white and/or yellow.

Those of you who chew tobacco probably have noticed your own tissue changes or we have shown them to you. They will be found in the spots where the tobacco is placed, usually between the teeth and cheek or lip. These precancerous changes are called leukoplakia.⁷

Incubation period of 10 years

Ninety percent of people with mouth cancer are tobacco users.⁸ Now consider that mouth cancer has a 10-year incubation period.⁹ Thus, if you use carcinogenic substance(s), it can take 10 years for problems to begin to show in our bodies. This is especially important to remember when trying new products that contain cancer-causing substances, like those listed in this article.

All of these products contain nicotine; a few have other item(s) that have their own cancer-causing impact. With an incubation period of 10 years, we won't have much data on the health effects of these fairly new tobacco products for a while yet.

Some people believe if you are not smoking tobacco, you are not at risk of cancer. False. "The lack of smoke gives people the deception that these products are safer ... As long as you're getting nicotine hits and irritation inside the mouth, it is not any safer."¹⁰

The only possible good side to these smokeless nicotine products is there is no secondhand smoke to increase risks of cancer to nonsmoking people.

My concern is the same as Esposito's regarding early detection – What will be the signs, symptoms and health risks for the long-term use of dissolvable nicotine found in orbs/sticks/strips and possibly other products to come?

Orbs, sticks and strips are products manufactured by the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company. Each one has nicotine in it.

The products are flavored with cinnamon or mint and resemble popular candies such as Tic Tacs.¹¹ A smoker of a cigarette generally will receive about 1 milligram of nicotine.¹² Each Camel Orb, stick and strip delivers about 0.6 to 3.1 milligrams of nicotine.¹³

It's not just the user who can be at risk with these dissolvable products. If they're left lying around, a child might pick them up thinking they are candy. An adult might think they are candy and give them to a child.

Here are the numbers that support these concerns – 13,705 cases of tobacco product ingestion reported to poison control centers and 70 percent involved infants 1 year of age or younger.¹⁴ Small children can experience nausea and vomiting from as little as 1 milligram of nicotine.¹⁵

Hookah products arrived here from the Far East, India, China and East Africa. The hookah, also called a water-pipe, allows the smoke from tobacco to pass through water to be cooled.

There are cafés in Oregon – two in Eugene and six in Portland – where you can share a hookah experience with friends. Dr. Saxton has been told there is sugar added along with the flavoring.

Betel nuts are really areca nuts (from the areca palm) wrapped in betel leaves. They are chewed for a mild stimulant that causes a mild hot sensation in the body and slightly heightened alertness. The effects vary from person to person – the reaction has been compared to drinking a cup of coffee.¹⁶

Often the betel nut is mixed with tobacco, lime and/or flavorings and

spices.¹⁷ The effect on the body of the betel nut now will have the added effect of nicotine and the lime to enhance both effects.

There is archaeological evidence that betel leaves have been chewed along with the areca nut since very ancient times.¹⁸ Both continue to play important roles in many cultures, including those in India, Vietnam and New Guinea. In Vietnamese, the phrase "matters of betel and areca" is synonymous with marriage.

One last comment on betel nuts: Chewing them causes the saliva to turn red. Repeated chewing of betel nuts causes the chewer's teeth to turn black. Check out the Wikipedia sites listed below for pictures, including pictures of orbs next to a pack of Tic Tacs.

Back to chew. Which one is not a real name for chew? Well, they all are. Here are a few more: dipsky, pinch, wad and chewpoo.

1 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/chewing_tobacco

2 *The Velscope* by Marissa Esposito, ADHA Access magazine, March 2011, p 6

3 Petrosky R. Velscope-cancer screening, 2010. Available at www.drpetrosky.com/velscope.htm. Obtained from ADHA Access, March 2011, p 6

4 *The Velscope* by Marissa Esposito, ADHA Access Magazine, March 2011, p. 6

5 Ibid

6 <http://cancer.gov/cancertopics/tobacco/smokeless-tobacco>

7 <http://cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Tobacco/smokeless>, last viewed 5/4/11

8 Ibid

9 Ibid

10 *Emerging Tobacco Products*, by Josh Snyder, ADHA Access, March 2011, p. 12

11 www.pediatrics.org, download May 4, 2011, from the American Academy of Pediatrics webpage

12 http://tobaccoproducts.org/index.php/Camel_Sticks,_Camel_Orbs_and_Camel_Strips

13 Ibid

14 <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/125/5/896>

15 Big Tobacco Harms Innocent Children with Nicotine Pellets, April 19, 2011, course: Harvard School of Public Health; <http://sciencecodex.com/tobacco>

16 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Areca_nut

17 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Betel>

18 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Betel>