



Attachment A

TOBACCO FREE NEBRASKA

Chewing Tobacco Research Report
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Background

Tobacco Free Nebraska contracted with Firespring to conduct a focus group with males over the age of 18 who chew tobacco. The focus groups were hosted in Lincoln, Grand Island, Hemingford and North Platte. Participants were recruited through contacts at coalitions throughout Nebraska and social media sponsored posts.

Goals

- To understand the behaviors and driving factors behind Nebraska males over the age of 18 who chew tobacco.
- To develop key insights about Nebraska males who chew tobacco that will be used in developing cessation materials in 2017.

Target Demographic

- Firespring conducted four focus groups, targeted at Nebraska males over the age of 18 who chew tobacco.

Participants

- Lincoln – 6 participants (aged 18–21)
- Grand Island – 2 participants (aged 23, 28)
- North Platte – 4 participants (aged 21–58)
- Hemingford – 9 participants (aged 20–60)

Question Guide

- What is your current age?
- What type of tobacco do you currently use?
- How long have you been chewing tobacco?
- Why did you start using tobacco?
- Have you ever tried to quit using tobacco products? If so, what was the most difficult part?
- How many times have you tried to quit using tobacco over the past 12 months?
- What are the different ways you've tried to quit?
- What is the longest period of time you've successfully quit?
- What are the most important reasons you were motivated to quit?
- Have you used any other types of tobacco products? Do you currently use more than one type of tobacco product?
- Why do you think it's so difficult to quit? (Categories: Stress relief, don't want to, addiction, etc.)
- Have you heard of the Nebraska Tobacco Quitline?
- If so, have you called the Quitline? Share your experience.
- If you haven't called the Quitline, why not?
- Do you have any family members who use tobacco products?
- Do you have any comments/suggestions you would like to share regarding using or stopping tobacco use?
- What is your personal opinion regarding the use of tobacco products?
- What and when are you exposed to advertising and marketing messages most often?
- Where do you find out about current news and events?
- If you access news online, do you prefer your phone, a desktop/laptop or a tablet?
- Which social media platforms do you regularly use (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat)

Key Findings

Social connections with older teens who use tobacco products and general peer pressure are cited as the primary reasons participants tried chew as young teens. Tobacco use in the family is also a driving factor behind each participant's decision to chew tobacco.

- All 21 participants started chewing tobacco as teenagers. The oldest individual, aged 60, took his first dip at 12-years-old and has been chewing ever since (more than forty years).
- One participant shared that his Dad chews too. He believes chewing in the car together is a bonding experience. Other individuals have older siblings who use tobacco products and experienced peer pressure to try, or believe experiencing tobacco is a rite of passage in some way. One guy stated, "I don't really regret it (starting) and have some good memories chewing with the boys."
- All participants (with the exception of one) have family members who currently use or have used tobacco products. The outlier has a mother who is a dental hygienist. He was educated about the risk factors associated with chew and knows his gums are beginning to recede.

Regardless of age or geography, participants throughout the state universally enjoy smokeless tobacco and are not actively seeking ways to quit (with the exception of one).

- Participants agree using smokeless tobacco is an expensive, unhealthy habit and a significant source of enjoyment, stress relief and routine. Many of those surveyed are accustomed to using chewing tobacco during specific moments in the day (ex: before work, during work, in the car). Others feel invincible and believe there will not be extreme consequences in the future.
- The group believes chewing tobacco is more socially acceptable than cigarettes. They can chew in most social/work environments. This belief has contributed to primarily chewing tobacco over smoking cigarettes.

Cold turkey is the most popular method participants use when trying to quit using tobacco. Other techniques include the patch, lozenges, sunflower seeds, gum and eating more. One participant used Chantix to aid in quitting but experienced negative, violent side effects.

- A 20-year old Grand Island participant quit using tobacco for close to six months and started again once he was back in school because of the stress. Others believe they can quit whenever they want to but enjoy doing it.
- Only two participants have heard of the Nebraska Tobacco Quitline. One 60-year-old Hemingford participant (who primarily smokes), recalled messaging from the Wyoming Tobacco Quitline. He was given printed material and plans to call the Quitline.
- Withdrawal symptoms and side effects from quitting tobacco include severe headaches and irritable behavior. Nearly half the group shared stories of a wife or significant other that "couldn't stand" being around the addict and, in several

cases even purchased a can of chew for them. One participant stated without chew he would “punch his boss in the face.”

- Nicotine addiction and association (routine) are some of the most difficult components of quitting. One participant shared, “The hump to get over never seems to end. It’s uphill the whole time. I’ve failed miserably every time I’ve tried to quit.”

More than half of those interviewed use more than one type of tobacco product. Cigarettes are preferred over chew when consuming alcohol in a social setting. Only one participant preferred cigarettes over chewing tobacco on a daily basis.

- Only one person tried e-cigarettes. Another participant primarily smokes cigarettes and cigars. Several males shared the only time cigarettes come into play is when they are casually drinking.

Quick, easy access to a can of chew during all times of the day is essential and serves as a security blanket to these individuals. They purchase and store multiple cans of chew (in the freezer, cars, bags, pant pockets) at a time.

- Most of the participants in rural farming communities swallow, not spit the chew. They chew all the time, including during work and in social environments. Each North Platte participant was chewing during the session. One Hemingford man shared he can eat and chew at the same time.
- Dip is more of an ongoing behavior they are constantly doing.
- Younger participants take a dip when they study to help them concentrate and relieve stress. Older guys will not leave the house without having a dip.

Below are several participant quotes regarding chewing behavior:

- *“I have to think about if I have enough to get me through tomorrow and have to have at least two cans with me, just in case.”*
- *“I have it ready, if you have a bad day at work or something.”*
- *“I think to myself, I want to relax and not have to think when I get home.”*
- *“I have cans in the freezer, in my car and in my wife’s car.”*
- *“I drive truck for years and have to be able to see a can somewhere. Every time I stop, I’d buy 4–5 cans and throw it in the truck.”*

Even though participants recall shock-based anti-tobacco ads with imagery of deformed faces, the stories are too extreme and don’t resonate. The group acknowledges smokeless tobacco is unhealthy (and expensive) but are not experiencing physical consequences to the habit and believe they can stop when they want to.

- Several individuals communicated an attitude of immortality and invincibility when questioned about if they had health-related concerns in connection with their tobacco use.
- This belief drastically changed among those who had personal experiences of close family and friends with emphysema or lung cancer.
- Developing personalized messaging with an emotional tie is one of the primary factors that will influence behavior change, according to the research. One participant shared, “My four-year-old kid saw me spit and was trying to copy me. That made a difference to me.”

Marketing messages placed on gas station pumps and windows are an effective tactic when seeking to reach rural and urban males who chew tobacco with Quitline messaging. Facebook was also cited by participants, regardless of age as a platform they interact with daily.

- Several younger participants access news information via Snapchat while rural members still read the printed and online newspaper for information.

