New "Tobacco Sticks" Test Marketed in Kansas

Kansas' smoke-free law is not protecting people from the newest danger - smokeless tobacco sticks. This spring Marlboro and Skoal announced Kansas is one of only three states in which they will begin test marketing tobacco sticks.

According to Philip Morris, "PM USA is introducing Marlboro Smokeless Tobacco Sticks because many adult smokers are interested in smokeless tobacco alternatives to cigarettes, and PM USA believes those adult smokers may enjoy Marlboro Smokeless Tobacco Sticks." As clean indoor air laws take hold across the country, the tobacco companies are seeking ways to keep their customer base with new and creative products.

The tobacco sticks are sold in packages that look like matchbooks. The sticks themselves resemble chocolate-covered toothpicks. Because the packages are so small, and because the sticks look so much like toothpicks, there is a significant danger of young people using them in front of their parents or teachers because it can look like they are chewing on a toothpick.

According to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, there is a risk that young children may ingest a lethal amount of nicotine. "The estimated minimal
Last week Kansas City Royals Hall of Fame pitcher and broadcaster Paul Splittorff died after battling oral cancer and melanoma. Splittorff was the career-leading pitcher for the Royals, spending his entire major league career with the team. He was drafted to play with the Royals when they became an expansion team in 1969. After his retirement from pitching in 1984, Splittorff became the reliable voice of the team for 24 more years.

I was a big Royals fan as a kid and greatly admired Paul Splittorff. I remember going to games and marveling at his pitching. He always seemed like the nicest guy, and many of the obituaries published since last week hint at that.

I don't know if Paul Splittorff chewed tobacco, but I know a great many baseball players do. Knowing that he had oral cancer leads me to wonder if tobacco was a factor in his battle with that terrible disease. What I do know is that I'm a little bit sadder knowing we've lost one of my

The risks associated with using any smokeless tobacco are significant. Smokeless tobacco can lead to cancer of the mouth, lips, tongue, cheek and throat. It also causes permanent tooth discoloration, and may cause the gums to recede, as well as contribute to tooth loss.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment operates the Kansas Tobacco Quitline. The Quitline offers support and counseling for Kansans seeking to quit using tobacco. Call 800-QUIT-NOW to begin the process of quitting tobacco.

1. www.snuscentral.org
2. www.kdheks.gov
3. www.entnet.org
childhood heroes and that I'm a lot sadder knowing that ballplayers choose to chew tobacco at the risk of their own lives.

If you have an idea, story or suggestion for a Oral Health Kansas Weekly Wednesday Update please send an email to jparnell@oralhealthkansas.org

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