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ORAL HEALTH KANSAS
Weekly Wednesday Update

*Our Mission:
To improve oral health
in Kansas through
advocacy,
public awareness
and education.*

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KC Royals Legend Lost

by Tanya Dorf
Brunner

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."¹ 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 Splitterff died after battling oral cancer and melanoma. Splitterff 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, Splitterff became the reliable voice of the team for 24 more years.

I was a big Royals fan as a kid and greatly admired Paul Splitterff. 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 Splitterff 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

lethal pediatric dose is 1 mg of nicotine per 2.2 pounds of body weight. Ingestion of as little as 1 mg of nicotine by a small child can produce symptoms such as nausea and vomiting. While the nicotine content of Marlboro and Skoal tobacco sticks has not been tested, a study in Pediatrics found that a similar product Camel Sticks had 3.1 mg of nicotine per stick."²



The risks associated with using any smokeless tobacco are significant. Smokeless tobacco can lead to cancer of the mouth, lips, tongue, check and throat. It also causes permanent tooth discoloration, and may cause the gums to recede, as well as contribute to tooth loss.³

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.

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