

Use of Smokeless Tobacco Holds Steady as Cigarette Smoking Declines

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The use of smokeless tobacco among American workers has held steady since 2005, as cigarette smoking has declined, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Construction and mining workers are especially likely to use smokeless tobacco, which is a known cause of oral, esophageal and pancreatic cancer, the CDC reported last week.

Between 2005 and 2010, cigarette smoking declined from 22 percent to 19 percent among working adults. During the same period, use of smokeless tobacco products, including chewing tobacco and snuff, increased from 2.7 percent to 3 percent, HealthDay reports.

The findings come from the National Health Interview Survey, which found 19 percent of mining workers and 11 percent of workers involved in oil and gas extraction said they used smokeless tobacco. About 4 percent of cigarette smokers also use smokeless tobacco, a rate that remained unchanged during the study period.

The CDC recommends that employers increase efforts to curb use of smokeless tobacco. They advised employers to make workplaces tobacco-free, offer information on the health risks of tobacco and the benefits of quitting, and promote work-based tobacco cessation services, including offering health insurance that covers proven treatments for tobacco use and dependence.