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Smokeless, spitless and it will make you sick by Kim Rodrigues

First the good news: Studies show that kids are getting the message that cigarettes cause harm and parents disapprove. However, tobacco makers have new products targeted at youth. They are smokeless, spitless, dissolve in the mouth and are just as addictive.

“Ariva” is a small flavored tobacco pill that dissolves in the mouth. According to the Massachusetts Department of Health, these products are made from finely milled tobacco and held together with food-grade binders. Each pill contains 1.5 mg of nicotine (almost the same amount as a cigarette.) They come in flavors such as wintergreen, mint or java and are packaged in small rectangular packages that can look like candy, mints or cold pills.

There’s also a product called SNUS, which comes in cute tin containers like mints and flavors like “frost.” These need to be refrigerated. Make no mistake, none of these are candy. However, they are tasty and melt in your mouth, making it easier to take more than one at a time. This introduces higher doses of nicotine to the body and can make one sick.

Massachusetts Department of Public Health warns to watch for these symptoms if small amounts are ingested:

- Paleness
- Sweatiness, shakiness
- Nausea and Vomiting
- Increased amounts of saliva

If larger amounts are ingested watch for these signs:

- Changes in blood pressure
- Changes in heart rate
- Confusion
- Seizures or coma

The Regional Center for Poison Control and Prevention (1-800-222-1222) has more information about nicotine toxicity. Parents, talk to your kids about these new products. Tell them you disapprove and that they cause harm. If you see any of the products in stores, call BOLD at 508-324-3537. Tell us where you saw them. Together we create a healthy community for the youth of Greater Fall River.