



# THE TRUTH ABOUT NICOTINE POUCHES

LESSON PLAN

# OVERVIEW

Lesson Section	Time	Activity	Teaching Methods	Resources
Introduction & Discussion	5 min	Discuss what students already know about nicotine pouches.	Whole - class discussion	None
What Are Nicotine Pouches?	5 min	Explain how they work and compare them to snus.	Direct instruction, Q&A	Slide deck
Main Activity: Sales Pitch	20 min	Students create a sales pitch for nicotine pouches, while others challenge their claims.	Group work, role - play	Task sheets
Science of Nicotine	5 min	Explain the effects of nicotine on the brain and body.	Direct instruction	Slide deck
Marketing Tricks: Decode the Ad	15 min	Students analyze real nicotine pouch ads and spot marketing tactics.	Group work, discussion	Task sheet Printed ads
Tobacco vs. Nicotine Pouch Ads	5 min	Compare how cigarette ads were banned but nicotine pouches use similar tactics.	Discussion	Slide deck
Wrap - Up & Reflection	5 min	Students discuss takeaways and reflect on marketing influence.	Whole - class discussion	Reflection prompts

# PRESENTATION

## Slide 1: Overview

- We're talking about nicotine pouches - what they are, how they affect the body, and why they're becoming more popular.
- You might have seen them in shops, online, or even in schools - but are they as harmless as they seem?

## Slide 2: What do you know?

- What do you already know about nicotine pouches? (Encourage discussion and note any misconceptions, such as 'they're safe' or 'they're just like chewing gum.' These will be addressed later.)

## Slide 3: "What Are Nicotine Pouches?"

- Nicotine pouches look like small tea bags placed under the lip.
- Nicotine is absorbed directly into the bloodstream - no smoke or vapour.
- They contain no tobacco, but still highly addictive nicotine.
- Effects last 15 to 60 minutes before the pouch is thrown away.

## Slide 4: Names

- Nicotine pouches have many names - 'nicopods,' 'lip pillows,' 'upper deckies.'
- Do you know any other names? Why do they have so many names? (Possible answers: To make them sound fun, trendy, or harmless.)
- Some call them 'snus,' but snus is banned in the UK. So, what's the difference?

### Slide 5: "What's the Difference"

- Nicotine pouches contain synthetic or extracted nicotine.
- Snus is made from tobacco and releases nicotine more slowly but is still harmful.
- Nicotine pouches are legal and sold next to mints and gum, while Snus is banned because it can cause cancer.
- Nicotine pouches come in sweet, fruity, and minty flavours, making them more appealing, while Snus usually has a strong, bitter tobacco taste.
- We don't yet know the long-term effects of nicotine pouches, but Snus has been linked to diseases like pancreatic cancer and gum disease. Some nicotine pouch users report burning sensations, gum pain, and ulcers from the high nicotine concentration.
- Some nicotine pouches contain up to 50mg of nicotine per pouch, which is stronger than some cigarettes.

### Slide 6:

If Snus is banned for health risks, should we be cautious about nicotine pouches? Should there be more rules and regulations?

### Activity 1: Sales Pitch (20 Minutes)

**Objective:** To help students understand how nicotine pouches are marketed and think critically about advertising messages.

**Materials:** Using the activity sheet please use the pitch sheet and question sheet.

### Instructions: Divide students into small groups (8-10 per group)

- Half of the group will be the Sales Team, the other half will be the Smart Consumer Team. They will have 10 minutes to work on their pitch and questions:
  - **Sales Team:** Must create their own nicotine pouch brand and then do a 30 - second sales pitch to the class without mentioning nicotine, addiction, or health risks. "In your groups, you have 10 minutes to come up with a a new nicotine pouch brand, and come up with a 30 - second sales pitch. You must focus on why people should buy them without mentioning nicotine, addiction, or health risks. Use techniques advertisers would use - think about packaging, flavours, and lifestyle."
    - Example: "Introducing FreshMint Pods - your secret to all - day freshness and focus. With a burst of minty coolness, you'll feel sharp, confident, and ready to take on the day! No smoke, no mess - just pure convenience. Try FreshMint!"
  - **Smart Consumers:** Must write three tough questions to challenge the Sales Team on what they're not telling consumers. "While the sales teams are preparing, your job is to write three tough questions to challenge them. Think critically - what are they hiding? Why don't they mention the health risks?"

**Presentations & Challenges (10 min):** Each Sales Team presents their pitch. Smart Consumers challenge them with tough questions.

### **Slide 8: Dopamine Surge (The “High”)**

- So how does nicotine get you addicted? Nicotine triggers a dopamine surge, creating a temporary ‘high’. Over time, the brain produces less dopamine naturally, making normal activities less enjoyable. This leads to a cycle of dependence, where nicotine is needed just to feel ‘normal.’

### **Slide 9: Increased Stress & Anxiety (The "Crash")**

- Many believe nicotine reduces stress, but it actually increases heart rate & anxiety.
- When nicotine wears off, dopamine drops fast, leading to irritability & cravings.
- This cycle worsens stress over time, making people feel like they need nicotine to cope.

**Slide 10:** Nicotine permanently changes brain pathways. Young users are more likely to struggle with attention, memory, & mood regulation - even if they quit later.

### **Slide 11: Physical Effects of Nicotine Use:**

- Increases heart rate & blood pressure, raising heart disease risk.
- Can cause dizziness, nausea, headaches, & disrupted sleep.
- Impairs focus & learning, making concentration harder.
- Changes brain pathways, making quitting more difficult.
- Increases addiction risk to other substances.

### **Slide 12: Hidden Dangers of Nico Pouches**

- Long-term effects unknown - many contain synthetic nicotine.
- High-strength pouches can lead to nicotine poisoning, with symptoms like vomiting, dizziness, headaches, and seizures
- Easy to over-consume - since they’re discreet, people may take in more than they realise.
- Not risk-free: they expose the brain to high doses of nicotine, increasing dependence.

### **Slide 13:**

- Some pouches contain as much nicotine as 3-4 cigarettes in one pouch.

### **Slide 14: How Nicotine Pouches Are Marketed**

- Branded as ‘clean, modern, & safe’ - but still highly addictive.
- Sold next to mints & gum - makes them seem harmless.
- Flavoured & trendy marketing - appeals to young people.
- Designed to hook users - just like cigarettes & vapes.

### **Slide 15-18:**

- Many influencers promote nicotine pouches, making them seem fun & harmless.
- They highlight flavours, packaging, & convenience - but not addiction risks.
- This makes young people believe they are safe or normal to use.

## Activity 2 – Decode the Ad: Spot the Marketing Tricks

**Objective:** Students analyse real nicotine pouch ads to uncover hidden marketing strategies and understand how companies make nicotine products appealing.

**Materials:** Using the activity sheet please use the decode the advert task sheet and print out one of the adverts for each group.

### Instructions: Divide students into small groups (3 - 5 per group)

- Each group receives an ad for a nicotine pouch product (printed or on - screen).
- Groups have 10 minutes to analyse the ad using these guiding questions:
  - Visual Appeal: What colours, fonts, and images are used?
  - Messaging: What is the ad trying to make you feel?
  - Target Audience: Who do you think they're trying to attract?
  - Missing Information: What do they not tell you?
  - Comparison: Would this type of advertising be legal for cigarettes? Why?

### Present Findings (5 - 10 min)

- Each group presents their case study and their conclusions.
- The class discusses common themes: What was the most surprising thing you noticed in these ads?" "Why do companies avoid talking about health risks?"

### Slide 25-28: Tobacco Tactics

- What do today's nicotine pouch ads have in common with old cigarette ads?
- For decades, cigarette companies used slick marketing, celebrity endorsements, and lifestyle branding to make smoking seem cool, healthy, or sophisticated.
- UK bans on tobacco advertising: 1965: Cigarette ads banned on TV. 2003: All tobacco advertising & sponsorship banned to protect public health.
- Why? Research showed marketing increased smoking rates, especially among young people. Once ads were restricted, smoking rates declined.
- Now, history is repeating itself - since cigarette sales have dropped, tobacco companies are using the same tricks to sell nicotine pouches & vapes
- Think critically: Are nicotine pouches really about choice, or just the industry finding new ways to sell addiction?

### Slide 29: Are There Any Rules for Nicotine Pouches?

- In the UK, nicotine pouches are not covered by the same tobacco laws as cigarettes and vapes, leading to fewer restrictions on their sale and marketing.
- No limits on nicotine strength - Some are stronger than cigarettes. No clear health warnings. Fewer sales restrictions.
- Do you think it's fair that they're sold this way? If they were treated like cigarettes, what would change?

### Slide 30: If Something Looks Harmless, Does That Mean It Is?

- Now that you've seen how nicotine pouches work, their health effects, and their marketing tactics, let's reflect What surprised you most today? How does marketing influence people without them realising?



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