



Trend Alert!

SNORTING SMARTIES

By Walt Mueller

Trend Alert: Snorting Smarties

Like most kids at the time, I spent my early-1960s elementary school years “smoking” candy cigarettes, el bubble brand bubblegum cigars, and foil-filled look-alike cigarettes that emitted a chalk-dust haze when you’d blow through one end and out the other. At the time, *The Flintstones’* animated adventures were sponsored by Winston Cigarettes, meaning that Fred and Barney were featured in commercials where they sat up against the house taking leisurely drags on animated smokes. As kids, we were being nurtured to grow into smokers, and many of my friends did. It’s not at all surprising that even though I came from a smoke-free family, I tried to light up for the first time at the age of five.

In today’s world, kids are still using candy to imitate foolish and even illegal “adult” behaviors. And thanks to the Internet and close to 10,000 homemade YouTube tutorial videos, snorting and smoking the cellophane-enclosed rolls of the sugary candy known as Smarties is going viral through youth culture, particularly among our elementary and middle-school-aged kids. The potentially dangerous practice has become so prevalent, that school districts are now sending home letters of warning to parents in an attempt to make them aware of this risky trend.

In order to “smoke” or snort Smarties, kids crush the candy into a fine powder. After pouring the powder into their mouths, they blow the dust out of their mouths, mimicking a smoker’s exhale. Others are mastering the ability to send the dust from their mouths up into their noses, thereby allowing them to exhale through their nostrils. Online videos show Smarties smokers blowing smoke rings, and in some cases, hacking away like a habitual smoker from a Smartie induced coughing fit.

In a nod to snorting cocaine or other illicit drugs, kids will pour the powder out onto a hard surface, and then use a straw or rolled-up dollar bill to snort “lines” or piles of Smartie dust into their nasal cavities. Health experts warn that this kind of imitation could indicate a curiosity or fascination with illicit drug use, and even serve as a warning sign for future drug use. . . perhaps even in the not-so-distant future.



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Parents need to know that there are no known benefits or highs that come from snorting and smoking Smarties. At this point, it's purely an imitative behavior that's spreading through youth culture. Many kids believe it makes them look "cool." But medical professionals are sounding warnings about potential risks.

We recommend that you talk with your children about Smartie snorting and smoking. Ask them if they've encountered the practice, heard peers talking about it, or even engaged in it themselves. In an effort to encourage them to steward the God-given gift of their bodies to the glory of God, warn them of the following dangers.

- Pieces of Smarties that have not been fully pulverized could have sharp edges, causing cuts in the mouth, throat, and nasal cavities.
- The powder can be inhaled into the lungs, leading to an asthma-attack, coughing fits, breathing problems, or laryngospasms that cause the voice box to spasm or even close.
- People with sugar allergies can have an allergic reaction. In extreme untreated cases, there could be respiratory arrest and even death.



- Scarring of the nasal cavity can occur. In addition, uncrushed pieces of Smarties can get lodged in one's nose, requiring removal by a medical professional.
- Leftover sugar residue can cause infections in the nasal cavities, sinuses, and lungs.
- Continued use can result in sugar addiction. For those with a pre-disposition to hyperactivity, sugar ingestion can serve as a trigger.

- Medical professionals are warning that it is possible that frequent snorting of Smarties could lead to a build-up of sugar residue that gets wedged inside the nose. In turn, this could lead to a fly being drawn to the sugar and laying eggs, which could result in tissue breakdown and maggots.

As always, we recommend that parents exercise their God-given responsibility and right to guide and direct their children into responsible, healthy behaviors. Exercise a preventive influence by talking to your kids about the dangers and risks associated with Smartie snorting and "smoking."



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For more information on today's youth culture, visit the website of the Center for Parent/Youth Understanding at www.cpyu.org.

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