

## EFFECTS OF TOBACCO

# Facts About Tobacco Use

**What is tobacco?** All tobacco products are made from the leaves of the tobacco plant that are picked and dried. *Over 600 additional ingredients* are added to the tobacco before it is made into a commercial product. Tobacco is usually smoked, chewed or held in the mouth. Most people that smoke tobacco do so from pipes, cigars, or cigarettes. People also use chewing tobacco which is often called “chew” or “dip”.



**Smokeless tobacco.** The two main types of smokeless tobacco include: chewing tobacco and a relatively new product called snus (rhymes with “noose”). Both of these products are very harmful to the mouth and body. Smokeless tobacco contains many of the same poisons that are in cigarette smoke; in fact, smokeless tobacco contains at least 28 cancer-causing agents. Smokeless tobacco products are just as addictive as smoking cigarettes, cigars or pipes.

**Chewing tobacco:** People who chew tobacco often have bad breath, stained teeth, and many diseases of the mouth including mouth cancer, lip cancer, cancer of the tongue, and throat cancer. Chewing tobacco also contains microscopic particles of fiberglass which cut the insides of the mouth, allowing the addictive nicotine to get into the bloodstream quicker, often leading to faster addiction.

**Snus:** This is a moist powder tobacco typically placed in small teabag-like pouches which are placed under the upper lip and do not require spitting. Snus was introduced in the USA after many states introduced smoking bans. Snus was designed specifically to help smokers get their “nicotine fix” at times when they are not allowed to smoke. Snus contains more nicotine than cigarettes, has cancer causing chemicals and has been shown to cause mouth cancer, pancreatic cancer, gum disease and tooth loss. Advertisers are using friendly, but deceptive, taglines to entice users to try this product (Example: “Pleasure for Wherever”).

**Cigar and Pipe smoking.** The three types of cigars are: large cigars, cigarillos and little cigars. Cigars contain the same toxic and carcinogenic compounds found in cigarettes and are NOT safe alternatives to cigarette smoking. Regular cigar and/or pipe smoking is associated with an increased risk for cancers of the lung, mouth, larynx and esophagus.



**What substances are in tobacco?** Tobacco contains thousands of harmful substances including the very dangerous chemical nicotine - - which is the most addictive substance known to man. Tobacco also contains other poisonous ingredients such as tar which is a brown substance that stains a smoker’s teeth and fingers. When the tobacco is burned it produces over 4800 additional chemicals including carbon monoxide, in addition to at least 69 known carcinogens (cancer-causing agents). Many tobacco products also contain sugar and many artificial flavors (like mint or fruit) to improve the taste.

**Tobacco products are highly addictive!** Because cigarette and cigar smoke contain nicotine, people get addicted very easily to smoking. This makes smoking easy to start, but *very* difficult to stop. Millions of smokers have tried to quit, but have *not* succeeded. Less than 20 percent of smokers are able to stop smoking the first time they try to quit the habit.

**Frequently over-looked facts.** Some people think that it is safer to smoke filtered cigarettes versus a non-filtered cigarette; however, this is *not* true. No cigarette is safe. People who smoke filtered cigarettes tend to inhale more deeply to achieve the desired amount of nicotine, and the result is often cancer that develops lower in the lungs than cancer that develops in individuals who smoke non-filtered cigarettes.

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**Second-hand smoke is dangerous!!** People who do not smoke, but breathe in the smoke from other people's cigarettes, are also at risk for the same diseases and health problems as smokers. Second-hand smoke contains at least 50 carcinogens (chemicals that cause cancer). Non-smokers who are exposed to second-hand smoke increase their heart disease risk by 25-30 percent and their lung cancer risk by 20-30 percent. Some estimates suggest that between 25,000 to 70,000 people die each year due to exposure to second-hand smoke. Second-hand smoke is also associated with Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), respiratory infections, ear problems, and more frequent and severe asthma attacks in children. Mothers who smoke when they are pregnant may have babies who are born small, born dead, or have birth defects.



**Youth and Tobacco Use.** Young people rarely smoke cigarettes, but their use is likely to increase as they enter into high school. In the United States, most youth are NON-smokers; approximately 8 percent of middle school students smoke cigarettes; the percentage of students smoking increases to approximately 23% for those youth in high school. Some youth also use smokeless tobacco products such as dip and chewing tobacco. An estimated 4 percent of middle school students and approximately 10 percent of high school students use smokeless tobacco products. Tobacco use in adolescence is associated with many other health risk behaviors, including higher risk sexual behavior and use of alcohol or other drugs.

**Effects on the body.** Tobacco is a stimulant. Tobacco's ingredients make the heart beat faster and raise a person's blood pressure, making the body work harder than necessary. Smoking also irritates your mouth, throat, stomach, and nerves. Smokers are more likely to get cancer, heart problems, and other diseases than people who do not smoke. Smokers also have bad breath, yellow teeth, their clothes smell, and their fingers are stained. More than 440,000 people die from smoking and tobacco use every year. Tobacco use kills more people each year than all the deaths due to HIV (human immunodeficiency virus), illegal drug use, alcohol use, motor vehicle injuries, suicides and murders combined. On average, adults who smoke cigarettes die 13-14 years earlier than non-smokers.

**If you quit, your body will heal itself.** There is no question about the harmful effects of smoking. However, people who quit smoking lower their chance of getting cancer, heart disease, or other diseases that smokers suffer. One year after a smoker quits, the risk of a heart attack is less, and after 10 years of not smoking, their body is almost normal again.



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