

A DEADLY CROP

Tobacco has killed tens of millions of users over the past few centuries. In fact, tobacco is responsible for one in five deaths in the United States. If tobacco is so deadly, then what makes tobacco use so popular and widespread?

Tobacco is made from the leaves of a plant called *Nicotiana tabacum*, which is dried and put into tobacco products. It contains a mind altering substance that is also one of the most addictive substances in the world - nicotine. Nicotine is found in all tobacco products. Nicotine is absorbed into the blood when used and causes the body to release adrenaline and dopamine, activating the brain's reward and pleasure systems. This causes the brain and body to function differently.

Tobacco is harmful to users, but the smoke from cigarettes and cigars hurts everyone around the user too. The smoke from tobacco contains over 7,000 different chemicals. 70 of those chemicals are known to cause cancer, and 400 others are known toxins. Some of the chemicals in tobacco are also used in nail polish remover, in toilet cleaner, in battery acid and even to preserve dead bodies.



THE NICOTINE TRAP

You've probably heard that smoking cigarettes and chewing tobacco are bad for you. Have you ever wondered why so many people use tobacco anyway? The simple, one-word answer is addiction. Nicotine addiction, or dependence, is the most common form of dependency in the nation. Nicotine is equally as addictive as heroin, cocaine and alcohol.

When a user inhales tobacco smoke, nicotine is absorbed by the lungs into the bloodstream and quickly goes to the heart and brain. Spit tobacco is absorbed into the bloodstream through the gums. No matter how it enters the body, nicotine affects the way brain cells communicate with each other and changes the way the mind works. After a few uses, the brain becomes used to the feeling that nicotine provides. Using tobacco literally changes the chemical structure of your brain!

“Tobacco is a deadly, dangerous and addictive drug that has ruined millions of lives and families.”



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

If you or someone you know is having problems with tobacco, you are not alone. There are people and places ready to help. Resources include school counselors, family members, members of the clergy, hospital substance-abuse programs and private practitioners.

National Cancer Institute

www.cancer.gov

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

samhsa.gov

American Lung Association

lung.org

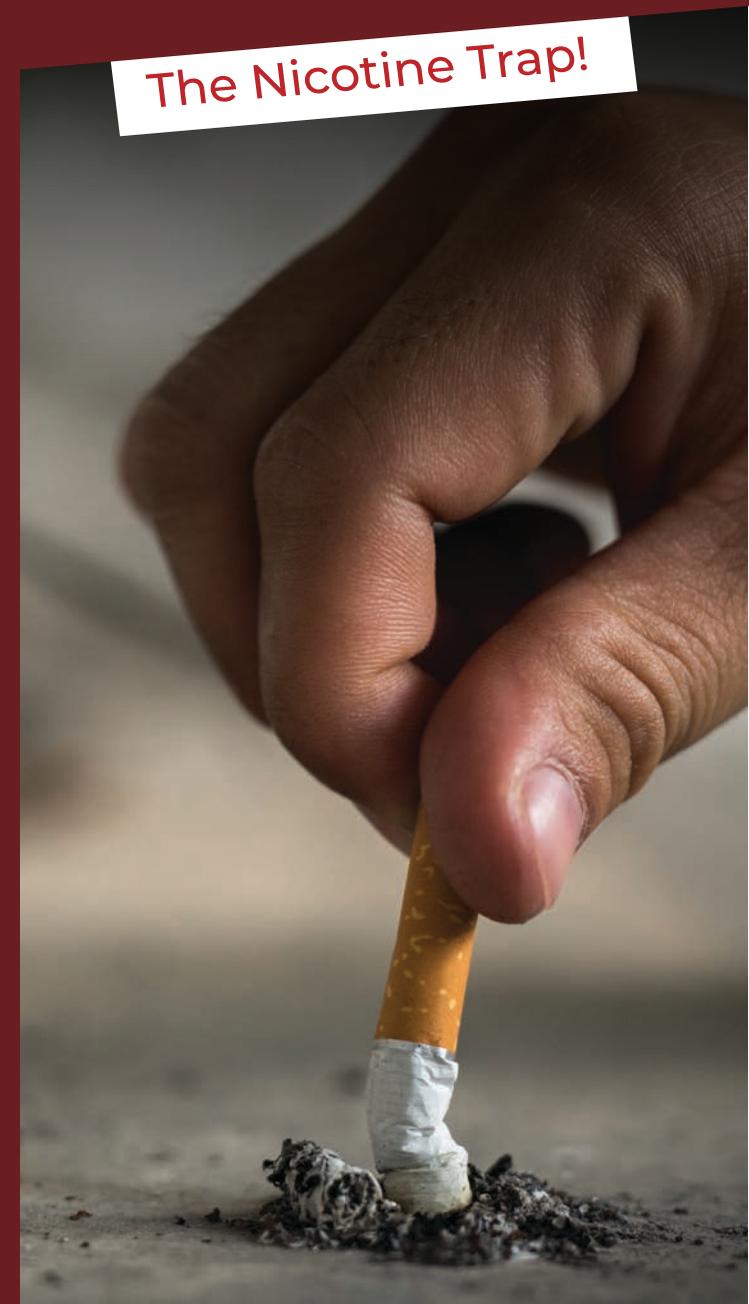
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TOBACCO

The Nicotine Trap!



TOBACCO FACTS

- Over 480,000 people die a year from tobacco usage or secondhand smoke.
- Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States.
- 16 million people in the United States suffer from a tobacco related illness.
- Two-thirds of smokers have tried to quit at least once and failed.
- On average, smokers die 10 years earlier than nonsmokers.
- Smoking during pregnancy increases the risk of premature births, birth defects and disabilities in newborns.
- The level of nicotine in spit tobacco is about three times higher than in cigarettes.

GOODBYE NICOTINE? HELLO WITHDRAWAL.

Once a user starts using tobacco, the brain and body start relying on these added chemicals and the altered brain state provided by nicotine to feel "normal" and to complete simple, daily tasks. Many people become dependent on the nicotine provided by tobacco



to feel happy, relaxed or focused. They start to connect routine activities with tobacco, creating mental triggers. This makes it hard to do those activities without smoking. This is called addiction. Without nicotine, the addicted brain suffers withdrawal. Withdrawal is a lot like being sick, both mentally and physically. The body and brain react to the lack of nicotine as the brain tries to change back to its normal state. This process makes users depressed, frustrated, angry and irritable. They may have trouble sleeping, difficulty concentrating, headaches, fatigue and an increased appetite. It also leads to nausea, a sore throat, cramping and insomnia. Withdrawal leads the user to start craving tobacco so they can feel normal again.



SHORT-TERM EFFECTS OF TOBACCO USE.

Tobacco use causes bad breath, smelly hair and clothes and yellow and brown stains on the teeth. Elevated heart rate occurs after use. Using tobacco also increases the risk of other drug abuse. Smokers quickly lose athletic ability due to decreased lung capacity. Young smokers' lungs stop growing, and their lung function is limited for life. Smokers have chronic coughs and increased rates of bronchitis and severe asthma. Spit tobacco makes chewers drool. The gums pull away from their teeth and they don't grow back. Gum loss leads to more tooth decay. Chewers often have sores, white and red patches on their lips and lumps in the mouth. Many of these sores are precancerous.

LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF TOBACCO USE

- Permanent gum and tooth loss
- Chronic bronchitis
- Weakened immune system
- Stomach ulcers
- Miscarriages or premature undersized babies
- Menstrual disorders and early menopause
- High blood pressure
- Heart attacks and congestive heart failure
- Blocked blood vessels and strokes
- Cancer of the upper lung, respiratory tract, mouth and throat
- Cancer of the bladder, kidney, pancreas and cervix
- Emphysema (collapsed lung structures)
- Chronic obstructive lung disease

SECONDHAND SMOKE

The smoke that comes off the end of a cigarette is even dirtier than



the smoke that the smoker inhales. Tobacco smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, including hundreds that are toxic and around 70 that can cause cancer. The toxic chemicals in secondhand smoke cause bronchitis, pneumonia, asthma, coughs and ear infections. Secondhand smoke causes nearly 34,000 deaths from heart disease and 8,000 deaths from stroke each year. Family members of smokers are also 40% more likely to develop lung cancer and heart disease than others. When you smoke, you put everyone around you in danger.

DON'T START

If someone offers you a cigarette or dip, say "No thanks, I don't smoke (or chew)." Don't be tobacco's next victim or put anyone around you in danger. Most users wish they had never started. Tobacco use is unattractive, annoying to others and deadly to everyone nearby. If you have friends who smoke or chew, encourage them to quit. The sooner they quit, the better off they'll be. It may even save their life.

Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of disease, disability and death in the United States. Don't be another statistic.