

Tobacco



CONNECTICUT Clearinghouse

A Program of Wheeler Clinic

800.232.4424 (Voice/TTY) 860.793.9813 (Fax)
www.ctclearinghouse.org



Drug Facts: TOBACCO

A Library and Resource Center on Alcohol, Tobacco, Other Drugs, Mental Health and Wellness



Nicotine is one of the most heavily used addictive drugs in the United States. Cigarette smoking has been the most popular method of taking nicotine since the beginning of the 20th century. In 1998, 60 million Americans were current cigarette smokers (28 percent of all Americans aged 12 and older), and 4.1 million were between the ages of 12 and 17 (18 percent of youth in this age bracket). Once hooked, nicotine addiction is extremely difficult to overcome.

In 1989, the U.S. Surgeon General issued a report that concluded that cigarettes and other forms of tobacco, such as cigars, pipe tobacco, and chewing tobacco, are addictive and that nicotine is the drug in tobacco that causes addiction. In addition, the report determined that smoking was a major cause of stroke and the third leading cause of death in the United States.

HEALTH HAZARDS

Highly addictive. Nicotine is highly addictive and acts as both a stimulant and a sedative to the central nervous system. The ingestion of nicotine results in an almost immediate "kick" because it causes a discharge of epinephrine from the adrenal cortex. This stimulates the central nervous system, and other endocrine glands, which causes a sudden release of glucose. Stimulation is then followed by depression and fatigue, leading the abuser to seek more nicotine.

Nicotine accumulation. Nicotine is absorbed readily from tobacco smoke in the lungs, regardless of whether the tobacco smoke is from cigarettes, cigars, or pipes. Nicotine is also absorbed readily when tobacco is chewed. With regular use of tobacco, levels of nicotine accumulate in the body during the day and persist overnight thus exposing daily smokers to the effects of nicotine for 24 hours each day.

Long-term hazards. In addition to nicotine, cigarette smoke is primarily composed of a dozen gases (mainly carbon monoxide) and tar. The tar in a cigarette, which varies from about 15 mg for a regular cigarette to 7 mg in a low-tar cigarette, exposes the user to a high expectancy rate of lung cancer, emphysema, and bronchial disorders. The carbon monoxide in the smoke increases the chance of cardiovascular diseases.

Second-hand smoke. The Environmental Protection Agency has concluded that secondhand smoke causes lung cancer in adults and greatly increases the risk of respiratory illnesses in children and sudden infant death.

Information provided by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.
www.theantidrug.com

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TOBACCO Use and Cessation

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Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable deaths in the United States, killing more than 400,000 people each year. This total is more than the number of deaths caused by AIDS, alcohol, drug abuse, car crashes, murders, suicides, and fires combined, according to the Centers for Disease Control. The good news is that people can successfully break the smoking habit. All it takes is a firm decision to quit, along with some hard work, persistence and the right kind of support.

Health Risks of Using Tobacco

A number of health and safety risks are associated with smoking, including:

- Increased risk of fire, injury, and automobile crashes
- Upper respiratory disease like colds, flu, sinus infections, bronchitis, and pneumonia
- Heart disease
- Lung cancer
- Lymphomas
- Emphysema
- Mouth and throat cancers
- Stroke

Why Quit?

- Your chance of a heart attack decreases.
- Your ability to smell and taste is enhanced.
- Your lungs work better and breathing becomes easier.
- Your blood circulation improves.
- Your risk for lung cancer decreases.
- New healthy cells replace pre-cancerous cells.

How to Quit

- Prepare for success. A positive mindset can help you follow through on your plans.
- Decide on a timeframe in which you will quit.
- Substitute one or two new, healthier habits to replace smoking. Nibble on fresh fruit or vegetables when the urge to smoke comes on. Go for a walk or jog when the urge gets too great.
- Try nicotine replacement therapy.
- Find a support group to help you get through the hard times.

Tip: Be sure to exercise and eat a healthy diet so you don't gain weight during the quitting process.

Quitting Smoking: How to Change

Smoking is a behavior that is learned over a period of time. After a while it can become linked with other activities such as drinking coffee, talking on the phone, driving in the car, or eating a meal. These other activities become triggers, events that have tight connections to the urge to smoke. Changing these triggers can help you to manage to quit smoking. Three ways to manage smoking triggers include:

Avoid the situation

If you smoke with your coffee then don't drink coffee. Have juice or something different.

Change the situation

Sit in the nonsmoking section at the restaurant or café.

Substitute for the cigarette

Keep something in your free hand when you're on the phone; a pen, a small toy, a photo.

Examples of other trigger breakers include:

- Distract yourself from urges to smoke. Talk to someone, go for a walk, or get busy with a task.
- Change your routine. Use a different route to work. Drink tea instead of coffee. Eat breakfast in a different place.
- Do something to reduce your stress. Take a hot bath, exercise, or read a book.
- Plan something enjoyable to do every day
- Drink plenty of water and other fluids.



(continued)

Chewing Tobacco

Smokeless tobacco, or chewing tobacco, contains more than 2,000 chemicals, many of which are directly linked to the following health problems:

- Gum disease
- Tooth loss
- Oral cancer
- Esophagus cancer
- Larynx cancer
- Tumors of the digestive tract

What You Can do About Chewing Tobacco

- Educate yourself and others at risk about the dangers of using *any* form of tobacco.
- Understand that people who use chewing tobacco put themselves at risk for many serious health problems.
- Encourage youth not to give in to peer pressure to use smokeless tobacco or any other substance.
- Get the facts from the American Cancer Society and the National Cancer Institute. Both offer information and literature on chewing tobacco that you can use to educate yourself and share with others.

Tip: If you decide to try a nicotine patch or pill to overcome your cravings, be sure you select the type and dosage appropriate for a smokeless tobacco user.

Tobacco: Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS)

You do not have to smoke to be at risk for the hazards caused by tobacco use. Environmental tobacco-smoke (ETS), or secondhand smoke, contains hundreds of dangerous substances that kill 60,000 Americans each year and cause cancer and other health problems.

What You Can Do About ETS

- Do not smoke in your home or permit others to do so.
- Ask anyone who smokes to go outside
- If someone smokes in the house, open the windows or use an exhaust fan to increase ventilation.
- Keep children away from anyone who smokes.
- Support smoking bans in your community.
- If smoking is allowed at restaurants in your area, frequent those that do not allow it on their premises or at least ask to be seated in the no-smoking section.



Resources

Connecticut Clearinghouse

1-800-232-4424 www.ctclearinghouse.org

Tobacco Free CT

www.tobaccofreect.org

American Cancer Society

1-800-ACS-2345 www.cancer.org

National Cancer Institute

www.cancer.gov 1-800-4-CANCER

American Lung Association

1-800-LUNG USA www.lungusa.org

CDC Office on Smoking, Tobacco and Health

1-800-232-1311 www.cdc.gov/tobacco

Connecticut Quitline

1-866-END HABIT

www.infoline.org/quitline1/

MATCH (Mobilize Against Tobacco for Children's Health)

1-888-366-MATCH

www.matchcoalition.com

**Information Provided by:
Massachusetts Dept. of Public Health
Wellness at Work**

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