

Tobacco and Nicotine, Cloves and Hookah

Brown Health Services Patient Education Series

Why are cigarette smoking and nicotine products dangerous?

Cigarette smoking is a known cause of many cancers, as well as lung disease, heart disease, ulcer disease and osteoporosis. Cigarette smoking also can cause pregnancy complications, premature aging/wrinkling of your skin and can contribute to sexual problems. Nicotine is the major contributing factor to the dependence-forming properties of tobacco use. The effects of nicotine include increased blood pressure, headaches, sleep disturbances, increased blood clotting, pain in joints, diarrhea, problems with blood sugar metabolism and most importantly, ADDICTION. In fact, research suggests that nicotine may be as addictive as heroin, cocaine and alcohol.

What about smoking clove cigarettes, cigars, hookah and bidi?

- **Clove** cigarettes (Kreteks) also contain nicotine. In fact blood levels of nicotine and carbon monoxide from smokers were tested after smoking kreteks and were found to be similar to non-clove brands of cigarettes, such as Marlboro.
- **Cigars** may have up to 4 times the nicotine of a cigarette.
- **Hookah** uses black “air-cured” tobacco which has a higher risk of esophageal cancer. The filtering effect of water does NOT make it less dangerous.
- **Bidi**, hand-rolled leaf-wrapped cigarettes, often offered with sweet flavors such as chocolate and cherry,

have a nicotine content that is 3-5 times that of a cigarette.

What about smokeless tobacco?

Chewing tobacco and snuff are associated with substantial risks for gum and mouth cancers, stained teeth, bad breath and loss of taste. Snus, a form of moist snuff, has a nicotine content 2-6 times that of a cigarette.

What about e-cigarettes?

Electronic cigarettes are battery operated devices that provide doses of nicotine for inhalation. A nicotine-containing liquid available in a variety of flavors is put in the device. While e-cigarette manufacturers promote their products as a path to smoking cessation, there is no research that supports this. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), state, and local health agencies are investigating a multistate outbreak of severe pulmonary disease associated with e-cigarette product use. Hundreds of cases of lung illness including deaths have been associated with the use of e-cigarette products nationwide. **Seek immediate medical assistance should you experience shortness of breath.** To reduce this risk do not use THC/nicotine pods from unregulated sellers. Inform your healthcare provider if you have been using an e-cigarette product so you can be thoroughly assessed. Additional concern has been raised over other ingredients identified in e-cigarettes such as

volatile organic compounds and ultra- fine particulates, including heavy metals.

Is it worth quitting?

- Within 20 minutes of your last cigarette, blood-pressure and pulse return to normal
- Within 8 hours of your last cigarette carbon monoxide levels drop to normal and oxygen levels increase to normal
- Within 2 days of quitting, nerve endings start to regrow and your ability to smell and taste improve
- Within 3 months, circulation improves and lung function increases up to 30% Lowered risk for lung cancer and heart disease within 1-2 years of quitting
- Reduced risk of developing chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Reduced risk of infertility and impotence

Getting Ready to Quit

- Set a start date
- Tell co-workers, friends and family of your intent to stop smoking
- Anticipate foods, activities and situations that are associated with smoking, and have oral substitutes available such as carrot/celery sticks, gum, mints, hard candies, sunflower seeds, etc
- Remove all tobacco products from home, car, work, and even your car ashtray!
- Talk to your provider about getting help to stop smoking

Resources to Help you Quit

Medications:

- OTC Nicotine replacement methods-gum, lozenges, patches are designed to reduce the intensity of nicotine cravings (difficulty falling

asleep, irritability, anxiety, difficulty concentrating) but will not prevent symptoms fully. Tapering of the nicotine dose helps wean off cigarettes.

- Varenicline (Chantix) is a prescription medication that works in the brain to reduce nicotine withdrawal symptoms and cravings.
- Bupropion (Wellbutrin) is a prescription medication that helps you stop smoking.

Other Modalities to help you quit:

- Acupuncture, hypnotherapy, yoga
- www.QuitNowRI.com, 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) Smokers' Helpline provides referrals to local programs, phone counseling and will mail out self-help materials and quit smoking information packets. It is free and confidential.

- BeTobaccoFree.gov

The US Department of Health and Human Services website for resources and information to quit smoking

- Miriam Hospital Behavioral Medicine 401-793- 8770

Combining medications with behavioral and other modalities may offer the best results for tobacco cessation, possibly doubling the chance of success. Talk to your provider to discuss options that work best for you.

What happens if I relapse?

Don't get discouraged; smokers may need several attempts to quit. Discuss with your provider or program what happened that derailed the attempt. On average it can take 4-5 attempts before achieving success staying tobacco free.