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What are tobacco, nicotine, and e-cigarette products?



Also known as:

Cigarettes: Butts, Cigs, and Smokes

Smokeless tobacco: Chew, Dip, Snuff, Snus, and Spit Tobacco

Hookah: Goza, Hubble-bubble, Narghile, Shisha, and Waterpipe

Tobacco is a leafy plant grown around the world, including in parts of the United States. There are many chemicals found in tobacco leaves or created by burning them (as in cigarettes), but nicotine is the ingredient that can lead to addiction. Other chemicals produced by smoking, such as tar, carbon monoxide, acetaldehyde, and nitrosamines, also can cause serious harm to the body. For example, tar causes lung cancer and other serious diseases that affect breathing, and carbon monoxide can cause heart problems.

Teens who are considering smoking for social reasons should keep this in mind: Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of disease, disability, and death in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), cigarettes cause more than 480,000 premature deaths in the United States each year—from smoking or exposure to secondhand smoke—about 1 in every 5 U.S. deaths, or 1,300 deaths every day. An additional 16 million people suffer with a serious illness caused by smoking. So, for every 1 person who dies from smoking, 30 more suffer from at least 1 serious tobacco-related illness.¹

How Tobacco and Nicotine Products Are Used

Tobacco and nicotine products come in many forms. People can smoke, chew, sniff them, or inhale their vapors.

- **Smoked tobacco products.**
 - *Cigarettes (regular, light, and menthol):* No evidence exists that “lite” or menthol cigarettes are safer than regular cigarettes.

- *Cigars and pipes*: Some small cigars are hollowed out to make room for marijuana, known as "blunts." Some young people do this to attempt to hide the fact that they are smoking marijuana. either way, they are inhaling toxic chemicals.
- *Bidis and kreteks (clove cigarettes)*: Bidis are small, thin, hand-rolled cigarettes primarily imported to the United States from India and other Southeast Asian countries. Kreteks—sometimes referred to as clove cigarettes—contain about 60-80% tobacco and 20-40% ground cloves. Flavored bidis and kreteks are banned in the United States because of the ban on flavored cigarettes.
- *Hookahs or water pipes*: Hookah tobacco comes in many flavors, and the pipe is typically passed around in groups. A recent study found that a typical hookah session delivers approximately 125 times the smoke, 25 times the tar, 2.5 times the nicotine, and 10 times the carbon monoxide as smoking a cigarette
- **Smokeless tobacco products.** The tobacco is not burned with these products:
 - *Chewing tobacco.* It is typically placed between the cheek and gums.
 - *Snuff:* Ground tobacco that can be sniffed if dried or placed between the cheek and gums.
 - *Dip:* Moist snuff that is used like chewing tobacco.
 - *Snus:* A small pouch of moist snuff
 - *Dissolvable products (including lozenges, orbs, sticks, and strips)*
- **Electronic cigarettes** (also called e-cigarettes, electronic nicotine delivery systems, or e-cigs). Electronic cigarettes are battery-operated devices that deliver nicotine and flavorings without burning tobacco. In most e-cigarettes, puffing activates the battery-powered heating device, which vaporizes the liquid in the cartridge. The resulting vapor is then inhaled (called "vaping").

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Smoking and Tobacco Use: Fast Facts*. Atlanta, GA. December 2015. Available at http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/fast_facts/index.htm.