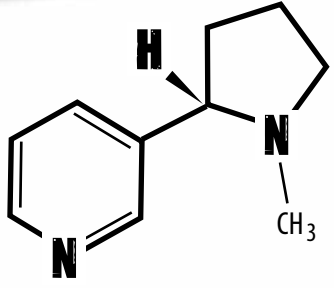


FACT AND FICTION



Tobacco is a leafy, flowering plant cultivated in mild to tropical regions. There are a variety of tobacco plant types, ranging from 12 inches to 4 feet in height. Nicotine is naturally produced by these plants. Cultivators harvest and process the tobacco plant into a final product.

Nicotine is a naturally occurring insecticide that acts as a stimulant in people. It is a highly addictive and carcinogenic (cancer-causing) drug.

Nicotine = cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco

Body Damage:

REVIEW ONLY

Brain – Nicotine turns up the volume of your brain chemically, altering the brain stem and control centers, causing addiction.

Lungs – The myriad of harmful chemicals and tar found in tobacco collect in the lungs. Would you voluntarily coat your lungs with road tar?

Heart – The inhalation/absorption of harmful chemicals leads to harmful chemicals in the blood stream. These chemicals slowly damage the inner walls of our hearts and arteries. Over time, they shrink and harden, leading to a heart attack or worse.

Mouth – Tobacco use can cause gum recession, accelerated tooth decay, reduced sense of taste, and oral cancer.

Addiction:

Nicotine dependence becomes a part of everyday life. Various physical/mental states such as hunger, boredom, relaxation, and stress reduction are solved or abated by nicotine. Addicts begin to believe the only way they can participate in life and feel normal is with nicotine. In the end, all an addicted person will know is that a cigarette or dip will help when, sadly, it is doing exactly the opposite.

When a person attempts to quit smoking, they not only have to handle the physical withdrawals but the psychological dependence, the "habit," which can be much more difficult. If you or someone you know is addicted and trying to quit, fight the habit as well as the physical withdrawal. Fight nicotine with other activities, such as exercise.

School Datebooks

DO NOT SUBMIT FOR PRINT

NICOTINE

Addiction Rank: 3rd

Harmfulness: 13th

Description: Naturally occurring insecticide.

Side Effects: Severely addictive, gum and mouth disease, dizziness, bad breath, altered brain chemistry, sores, cancer, early death.

MYTH: I don't have to worry about cancer. That only happens to older people.

BUSTED: It is true that the older you become, the greater the likelihood of contracting cancer. But, statistics are not safe havens. Cancer occurs because of cancer cells, not old age, and tobacco use can create cancer cells at any age.

MYTH: I only smoke socially. I can't become addicted.

BUSTED: Studies show that even a few cigarettes can cause the same level of nicotine addiction as that experienced in heavy smokers. Occasional use can quickly become a habit!