

Product Names:

Cigarettes, Cigars, Chewing Tobacco

Slang Terms:

Cigarettes, Smokes, Cigs, Butts, Smokeless Tobacco, Chew, Dip, Spit Tobacco, Snuff, Cancer Sticks, Sticks, Bidis (flavored, hand-rolled cigarettes), Cloves (60% tobacco and 40% cloves), Smoke, Bone, Coffin Nail.

Health Effects of Tobacco

- Smoking causes respiratory problems, such as emphysema, and chronic bronchitis.
- Smoking causes heart and cardiovascular disease.
- Smoking is the most common cause of lung cancer.
- Smoking is also a leading cause of cancer of the mouth, throat, bladder, pancreas, and kidney.
- Smokeless tobacco can cause mouth cancer, tooth loss, and other health problems.
- Tobacco affects your body's development. Smoking is particularly harmful for teens because your body is still growing and changing.
- The 200 known poisons in cigarette smoke affect your normal development and can cause life-threatening diseases, such as chronic bronchitis, heart disease, and stroke.
- Tobacco is addictive. Cigarettes contain nicotine – a powerfully addictive substance. Three-quarters of young people who use tobacco daily continue to do so because they find it hard to quit.
- Tobacco can kill you. Smoking is the leading preventable cause of death in this country. More than 400,000 Americans die from tobacco-related causes each year, and most of them began using tobacco before the age of 18.

Facts about Tobacco Use

- It is illegal for anyone under 18 to buy cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, or tobacco-related products.
- The poisons in cigarettes can affect your appearance. Smoking can dry your skin out and cause wrinkles. Some research even relates smoking to premature gray hair and hair loss.
- It can be hard to play sports if you use tobacco. Smoking causes shortness of breath and dizziness, and chewing tobacco cause dehydration.
- Smoking puts the health of your friends and family at risk. Approximately 3,000 nonsmokers die of lung cancer each year from breathing other peoples' smoke.
- Even though a lot of teens use tobacco, more don't. According to a 1998 study, less than 20 percent of teens are regular smokers. In fact, 64 percent of 12- and 17- year-olds have never even tried a cigarette.

How Can You Tell if a Friend is Using Tobacco? Sometimes it's tough to tell. But there are signs you can look for. If your friend has one or more of the following signs, he or she may be regularly using tobacco:

- Wheezing
- Coughing
- Bad Breath
- Smelly Hair and Clothes
- Yellow-strained Teeth and Fingers
- Frequent Colds
- Decreased Senses of Smell and Taste
- Difficulty Keeping Up with Sports and Athletic Activities
- Bleeding Gums (Smokeless Tobacco)
- Frequent Mouth Sores (Smokeless Tobacco)
- Shortness of Breath
- Increase Asthma Attacks
- Cracked Lips, White Spots, Sores, and Bleeding in Mouth (Users of Spit Tobacco)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Doesn't smoking help you relax?

A. No. Smoking can actually increase feelings of stress and nervousness. Break the cycle: Use drug-free strategies to calm your nerves like exercise and talking to your friends.

Q. Isn't smokeless tobacco safer to use than cigarettes?

A. No. There is no safe form of tobacco. Smokeless tobacco can cause mouth, cheek, throat, and stomach cancer. Smokeless tobacco users are 50 times more likely to get oral cancer than non-users. Those smokeless tobacco users who don't develop some type of cancer are still likely to have signs of use, like strained teeth, bad breath, and mouth sores.

Q. Isn't smoking sexy?

A. Only if you think bad breath, smelly hair, yellow fingers, and coughing are sexy. Advertisements often portray smoking as glamorous and sophisticated, but think carefully about who created these ads and why.

NCADI Tips for Teens – Tobacco

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, "Keeping Youth Drug Free" 2002.