

KNOW YOUR STUFF

TOBACCO

AKA: cigarettes, hookah, shisha, roll-ups & smokes plus brand names



WHAT IS IT?

Leaves from the tobacco plant are dried and processed then sold as cigarettes or loose tobacco to make hand-rolled cigarettes), both of which have a distinctive smell and taste when smoked. Sometimes tobacco is flavoured (shisha) and smoked through a water pipe (hookah). Chewing tobacco is also available, but is much less common.

THE HIGHS

Tobacco contains nicotine, which can make someone feel more alert.

THE LOWS

First time tobacco users often feel sick and dizzy, as well as jittery due to their heart rate and blood pressure going up. While smokers may feel it helps them relax, nicotine actually increases anxiety, partly because it is very addictive and causes cravings – these are temporarily eased if someone smokes, which causes a positive association, rather than smoking being a stress release in itself.

Smoking is often considered quite antisocial, as it makes clothes, hair and breath smell, can lead to yellowed teeth and nails, and also starves the skin of oxygen, making spots more likely, plus wrinkles and other signs of ageing.

Nicotine is one of around 5,000 chemicals in tobacco smoke, many of which are highly dangerous such as carcinogens that cause cancer, carbon monoxide that replaces oxygen in the cells of the body, and tar which builds up in the lungs. This is true of all types of tobacco. Smoking – including shisha – is profoundly damaging to nearly every organ of the body, and harms other people by exposing them to second-hand smoke that causes diseases of the lungs and heart and some types of cancer.

Younger people are particularly at risk of the health problems caused by tobacco, and exposing their developing brains to nicotine has been shown to increase the risk of addiction to other substances.

At the time of writing, the legal age for buying tobacco products in the UK was 18 years, but the proposed Tobacco and Vapes Bill is looking to gradually increase this, effectively banning it for anyone born in or after 2009. This is because – according to the charity Action on Smoking and Health – smoking is the leading preventable cause of illness and disability in the UK, and despite the fact that smoking rates have been steadily falling for a number of years, the cost to the NHS continues to be in the £billions.



For more information go to:

TALK TO FRANK

<https://www.talktofrank.com/drug/tobacco>



DSM foundation
The drug education charity

www.dsmfoundation.org.uk

The Wellbeing Hub
– from Teen Tips –



www.teentips.co.uk