A Deadly Crop

Tobacco has killed tens of millions of users over many centuries. In fact, millions die every year. What makes tobacco use so widespread?

Tobacco contains the most addictive substance known to science, nicotine. About one-third of all people who try nicotine even once become addicted to it! Nicotine is found in all tobacco, including cigarettes, cigars, and spit tobacco or snuff. It is processed from the leaves of the white-flowered plant *Nicotiana tabacum*.

All tobacco is harmful to users, but the smoke from cigarettes and cigars hurts everyone in the environment, not just the smoker. The smoke contains over 4,000 different chemicals in addition to nicotine. At least 43 of those chemicals are known to cause cancer, and 400 others are known toxins. Some of the chemicals are also used as nail polish remover, toilet cleaner, battery acid, gas chamber poison, and for preserving dead bodies.

Tobacco Facts

Tobacco kills more people than any other substance:
- About 430,000 tobacco users die in the United States every year.
- Worldwide, 4 million die each year from tobacco use. By 2030, this number will likely be 10 million.
- 53,000 people die each year from the effects of secondhand smoke.
- Two-thirds of smokers have tried at least once to quit smoking and failed.

Tobacco Statistics

Go to [www.intheknowzone.com](http://www.intheknowzone.com) for an extension of this pamphlet. Increase your knowledge using the information, statistics, images, and links. Test your understanding with a quick quiz.

Don’t stay in the dark. Get In the Know!

Tobacco Facts

- About 430,000 tobacco users die in the United States every year.
- Worldwide, 4 million die each year from tobacco use. By 2030, this number will likely be 10 million.
- 53,000 people die each year from the effects of secondhand smoke.
- Two-thirds of smokers have tried at least once to quit smoking and failed.

Tobacco Statistics

- The cost of tobacco for the average user is over $1800 per year.
- Smoking cigarettes adds approximately $15,000 to each individual’s medical spending.
- Federal and state governments spend over $45 billion each year on tobacco-related illnesses.

Dollars and Sense

- In addition, extra medical care for babies whose mothers smoke during pregnancy costs government $4 billion a year.
- Fires caused by smoking cause about $500 million in damage each year, and kill about 2,000 people.
Goodbye Nicotine? Hello Withdrawal
Without nicotine, the addicted brain suffers withdrawal. Withdrawal makes users depressed, frustrated, angry, or irritable. They may have trouble sleeping, difficulty concentrating, headache, fatigue, and increased appetite. Withdrawal leads the user to start using tobacco again for relief.

Smoke and Mirrors
Nicotine is why people who start using tobacco can't stop, but it's hard to figure out why anyone starts in the first place. Some young people start smoking or chewing because they think it'll make them look older. Tobacco does age its users—when they're 25 they look 35, and when they're 35, they look 50. Models and actors look sexy and healthy when they smoke, and that may influence others to start. But models and actors have makeup artists to hide their wrinkles and rotten gums, and security to keep you from smelling their nasty tobacco breath. They're also lucky audiences can't see their unsexy black lungs.

One tough influence to avoid is peer pressure. If someone hangs around with tobacco users, his or her odds of using go way up.

There is no good reason to use tobacco. It looks and smells awful, but the real issue is that tobacco is the single largest cause of death in the world.

Short-term Effects of Tobacco Use
Tobacco use causes bad breath, smelly hair and clothes, and it puts yellow and brown stains on the teeth. Elevated heart rate occurs after brief use. Using tobacco also increases the risk of other drug abuse. Smokers quickly lose athletic ability because smoking decreases lung capacity from the first drag. Young smokers' lungs stop growing, and their lung function is limited for life. Smokers have chronic coughs and increased incidence of bronchitis and severe asthma.

Spit tobacco makes chewers drool. The gums pull away from their teeth, and they don't grow back. Gum loss leads to more tooth decay. Chewers often have white and red patches, and lumps in the mouth. Many of these sores are pre-cancerous.

Long-term Effects of Tobacco Use
- Prematurely wrinkled skin.
- Permanent gum and tooth loss.
- Chronic bronchitis.
- Weakened immune system.
- Stomach ulcers.
- Abnormal sperm cells and impotence.
- Miscarriages or premature, undersized babies.
- Menstrual disorders and early menopause.
- High blood pressure.
- Heart attacks and congestive heart failure.
- Blocked blood vessels and strokes.
- Cancer of the upper lung, respiratory tract, mouth, and throat.
- Cancer of the bladder, kidney, pancreas, and cervix.
- Emphysema (collapsed lung structures.)
- Chronic obstructive lung disease.

Secondhand Smoke
The smoke that comes off the end of a cigarette is even dirtier than the smoke the smoker inhales. The toxic chemicals in secondhand smoke cause bronchitis, pneumonia, asthma, coughs, and ear infections in children or co-workers of smokers. Nonsmoking spouses of smokers are 40% more likely to develop lung cancer and heart disease than others.

Tobacco and Health
www.inttheknowzone.com/tobacco/damage/

Don't Start
If someone offers you a cigarette or a dip, say “No thanks, I don't smoke (or chew.)” End of story. Don't be tobacco's next victim. Most users wish they had never started.

Tobacco use is unattractive, annoying to others, and deadly to everyone nearby. If you have friends who smoke or chew, encourage them to quit. The sooner they quit, the better off they'll be.