



Nicotine in Disguise

Community Pediatric Asthma Service

Nicotine is highly addictive and harmful no matter how it is used. These products are “alternative” ways for people, to use and become addicted to deadly nicotine.

1. Electronic cigarettes

- Also sold as e-cigarettes, electronic inhalers, hookah pens, e-hookahs, e-vaporizers and vape pens. It delivers a chemical mixture that may include propylene glycol and may or may not include nicotine. “Vaping” is inhaling a fine, heated, smokeless mist.
- Manufactured around the globe by tobacco companies they are advertised as; a safer alternative to smoking tobacco, a harm reduction strategy and even a quit strategy.
- These alluring ads show an attractive, safe product in flavours that appeal to youth and do not focus on the fact that some are herbal and some contain nicotine. The underlying message implies that vaping is a healthy, harmless activity that can be performed in non-smoking environments.
- They vary from a single disposable unit with 500-600 puffs for \$10, to kits ranging in price from \$40 to \$200 that use refillable cartridges and are rechargeable with a battery or USB port.
- Liquid cartridges containing e-juice may or may not contain nicotine. Flavours range from *Craving Chocolate Hazelnut* to *Grandmas Apple Pie*, and even *Peanut Butter Chocolate* to *Pina Coloda Pleasure*. One herbal, non-nicotine product is flavoured *Canadian Tobacco*. 1 nicotine cartridge = 25 cigarettes.
- Manufacturers claim their product contains no tar or carcinogens. The FDA found toxins and cancer-causing agents in many of these products.
- *Electronic Cigarettes* A Position Statement of the Forum of International Respiratory Societies was published in 2014 in Am J Respir Crit Care Med Vol 190, Iss 6, p611-618.



2. Shisha

- Shisha is a water-pipe, popular in many Arab countries, in which fruit-scented tobacco is burnt using coal, passed through an ornate water vessel and inhaled through a hose. Some pipes operate by water filtration and indirect heat.
- In Canada only herbal products that do not contain tobacco are legally allowed to be sold in shisha bars.
- Under normal shisha use the smoke produced from a single pipe use contains approximately the same amount of nicotine and tar equivalent to 20 cigarettes.
- Water pipes can also be used to smoke tobacco and marijuana.
- A commonly held belief is that shisha is harmless because the smoke first passes through water before it is inhaled. Even after passing through water, the smoke produced by a water pipe contains a high level of toxins, including carbon monoxide, heavy metals and other carcinogens.
- Research done by the British Tobacco Control Collaboration Centre found “one session of smoking shisha – that’s 10 mg (of fruit tobacco) for 30 minutes – gave carbon monoxide levels that were at the lowest four and five times higher than having a cigarette. At the worst shisha was 400 to 450 times more dangerous than having a cigarette.”
- Health risks are relatively unstudied but generally considered to be the same as using tobacco

3. Marijuana

- For those youths grade 7-12 who have “ever tried” cigarettes, 59% have used marijuana in last year compared to 9% for those who have never tried cigarettes (key message: kids who have tried smoking are 5 times more likely to have tried marijuana. 2008/2009 Alberta Youth Smoking Survey)
- Marijuana smoke contains more tar and toxins than tobacco smoke
- A single joint is equal to 10 cigarettes in terms of lung damage, and 20 cigarettes in terms of lung cancer risk
- Marijuana can lead to addiction in some people
- Some users are smoking marijuana using e-cigarettes
- Smoking both tobacco and marijuana at the same time increase risk of respiratory symptoms and COPD. (CMAJ 2009)

Smokeless Tobacco Products

1. Chew, snuff and snus (pronounced snoose)

- Chew is loose leaf tobacco that is spit out after chewing. Snuff is a powdered form of chew. Snus is similar to chew but less noticeable because it is not spit out.
- These are all finely ground tobacco that can be dry, moist or in sachet like tea bag.
- Typically placed between the gum and cheek. It is sucked on and the juices are then spit out.
- These products are designed to enhance social acceptability of tobacco and are addictive. They are not safe alternatives to smoking.
- Fruit flavors in this product continue to be sold legally in Canada following the ban of fruit flavoured tobacco in other forms.
- Alberta has 40% of the spit tobacco market, mostly boys and young men.
- Adolescents who use smokeless tobacco are more likely to become cigarette smokers.
- Smokeless tobacco contains 3000 chemicals, 28 known carcinogens.
- Can increase risk of oral cancer, myocardial infarction and stroke.
- A person who uses 8 to 10 dips per day receives the same amount of nicotine as someone who smokes 30 – 40 cigarettes per day.

2. Dissolvable Tobacco Products

- Camel Orbs (aspirin size tablet, looks like a mint), Camel Sticks (toothpick-like), Camel Strips (edible like Listerine Pocketpicks breath strips)
- Marketed as “fresh and mellow” with labels that appeal to youth. “Tobacco melts in the mouth”.
- Fewer health risks than cigarettes, but dangerous because they keep people addicted to nicotine
- Bright packaging appeals to youth and it is easy to hide.

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