

## ALL ABOUT ADDICTION & NICOTINE

### Nicotine Addiction

Nicotine is a powerful psychoactive drug, and users become physically and psychologically dependent.

- **Nicotine is harmful to every bodily organ**
- **Nicotine negatively affects the immune system**
- **Nicotine is harmful to every vital organ in the body, especially the brain**
- **In the lungs, nicotine is a primary contributor to lung cancer, emphysema, pneumonia, and chronic bronchitis**
- **Nicotine has been connected to leukemia and cataracts.**
- **It has been strongly associated with cancers of the esophagus, larynx, throat, mouth, bladder, pancreas, liver, kidneys, cervix, stomach, colon, and rectum.**
- **The heart and circulatory systems demonstrate the harmful effects of nicotine through strokes, heart attacks, vascular diseases, and aneurysms.**
- **In terms of the reproductive system, nicotine increases the risks for infertility and miscarriages in women and impotence and infertility in men.**
- **Infants are at risk for low birth weight, premature delivery, and lung problems when their mothers use nicotine during their pregnancies.**

*All this danger from nicotine would make you wonder why you would be encouraged by physicians to substitute a cigarette for pure doses of nicotine offered by drug companies as nicotine patches, nicotine gum, etc. (see [PDF on pharmaceutical substitutes and the dangers](#)).*

Addicting substances, including tobacco, have the following characteristics:

- **There is a compulsion to use a substance in face of the knowledge of negative health and social consequences.**
- **The user progressively needs more frequent and larger doses to experience the same effect.**
- **Uncomfortable symptoms occur when the drug is withdrawn or the dose is reduced (so too when one uses pharmaceutical substitutes).**

Research has shown that cigarette smoke delivers sudden jolts of nicotine to the brain within 7 seconds of its inhalation, rapidly increasing the levels of the neurotransmitter dopamine in brain tissue, which in turn leads to a very temporary feeling of pleasure and a sense of well being. As nicotine levels fall, the smoker experiences intense craving, often described as the “nicotine fit”.

## Symptoms of nicotine withdrawal include:

- **Anxiety**
- **Depression**
- **Insomnia**
- **Irritability**
- **Difficulty concentrating**
- **Restlessness**
- **Anger**

Actually this list is a lot shorter than the effects of being on nicotine substitutes....**see the PDF on the dangers of pharmaceutical substitutes.**

As with other addictions, apart from the dependence of the body on chemical substances, a smoking addiction is often related to everyday lifestyle events that can include thinking deeply, eating, drinking tea, coffee or alcohol, or general socializing. As a result, smokers may miss the act of smoking particularly at these times, and this may increase the difficulty natural in a cessation attempt. As a result of a lower dopamine response from nicotine receptors in the **brain**, varying degrees of **depressive** feelings may temporarily ensue, along with physical responses where the smoker feels less able to perform the day to day tasks previously related to smoking without having the usual cigarette to accompany them.

High **stress** often results when heavily addicted individuals or long-time smokers attempt to quit, in part because their everyday lifestyle events have been altered and they may miss the social interaction normally associated with the habit. Hypnotherapy addresses this too.