

Why are cigarettes addictive?



Most people who smoke are addicted to the *nicotine chemical* that is contained in cigarettes and other tobacco products. The tobacco companies want people to be dependent on cigarettes, because they want them to continue to smoke. Tobacco addiction is one of the most common addictions and substance abuse disorders in the United States. People can be addicted to other things such as, food, sex, caffeine, alcohol, illegal drugs, gambling, and even exercise. Whenever you do something TOO MUCH, it can be bad for you! But some addictions, such as smoking or taking illegal drugs are dangerous any time you do it.

What is tobacco addiction?

Think about when you first began to smoke. Did you first try it when you were very young or as a teenager? Were you with friends? Then after you smoked for a while, you started wanting to smoke more. Well, being addicted means that whenever you smoke, you want to smoke more. And if you don't smoke, your body begins to crave (really want to have) another cigarette.

What is tobacco withdrawal?

When you don't have a cigarette, you may begin to feel withdrawal symptoms. Many times, people will feel this way in the morning. That is because when they were sleeping they could not have a cigarette. Some withdrawal symptoms are: being irritable, feeling anxious, feeling frustrated, being restless, feeling depressed and feeling angry.

IMPORTANT POINT TO REMEMBER

Being addicted means that even if you know something is really bad for you, you continue to do it. We all know how bad smoking is for our health, yet people continue to smoke.

SELF QUIZ: Are you addicted to tobacco?

How many years have you smoked? _____ years

Do you smoke more now than you did when you first tried smoking cigarettes?

_____ Yes _____ No

Do you want to have a cigarette as soon as you wake up in the morning?

_____ Yes _____ No

How soon after you wake up do you smoke your first cigarette?

___ within 5 minutes ___ 6-30 minutes ___ 31-60 minutes ___ after 60 minutes

When you are not having a cigarette, do you think about smoking?

_____ Yes _____ No

If you don't have a cigarette, do you start to have withdrawal?

_____ Yes _____ No

Check any withdrawal symptoms you began to feel when you did not have a cigarette?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anger | <input type="checkbox"/> Impatient |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety | <input type="checkbox"/> Insomnia (cannot sleep) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crying | <input type="checkbox"/> Irritable |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Depressed Mood | <input type="checkbox"/> Nervous |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty Concentrating | <input type="checkbox"/> Restless |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frustrated | |

Do you think you are addicted to smoking? _____ Yes _____ No