

## Tobacco

Smoking is the largest cause of preventable death in the world. Cigarettes, snuff, chewing tobacco, pipes, cigars, and e-cigarettes are all forms of tobacco.

**Nicotine** is the addictive substance found in tobacco products. It is a fast-acting drug which reaches the brain within 10-15 seconds of being inhaled/ingested. A teen's brain is still developing, which makes teens more vulnerable to becoming addicted to nicotine. Nicotine can also stunt the growth of the prefrontal cortex of the brain.

**Carbon Monoxide (CO)** is another chemical found in tobacco products. It is a poisonous gas that has no smell or taste. The body finds it hard to tell the difference between carbon monoxide and oxygen so carbon monoxide is absorbed into the bloodstream. The CO attaches to the red blood cells in the bloodstream blocking the oxygen and making it hard to breathe. The heart then has to work harder to pump more oxygen rich blood to the body.

**Tar** is a sticky substance that forms when tobacco burns. Tar gets into the lungs of people who smoke. When a person inhales cigarette smoke, 70% of the tar remains in the lungs.

### Short-term effects of using Tobacco products

- Stimulates the brain reward system leading to addiction
- Increases heart rate and blood pressure
- Increases breathing rate
- Increases blood sugar levels
- Smells like smoke
- Loss of taste sensation

### Long-term effects of using Tobacco products

- Addiction - physically and mentally needing tobacco
- Bronchitis - inflammation of the bronchial tubes
- Emphysema - loss of elasticity in the lungs, making it difficult to inhale and exhale
- Cancer - cancerous cells replicate and spread
- Heart and Artery Diseases
- Early death - those who smoke die, on average, at least 10 years younger than non-smokers

**E-Cigarettes** are battery operated devices designed to look like regular tobacco cigarettes. E-cigarettes contain liquid nicotine. E-cigs are currently unregulated, meaning there is no law forcing manufacturers to disclose what other chemicals you are actually inhaling. Liquid nicotine is the most potent form of nicotine and can be lethal if ingested. Young people are attempting to bypass the vapor and drink the liquid nicotine with deadly consequences. Because we still do not know the long-term effects of e-cigs, we cannot determine how they will affect our health.

