



[cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org) | 1.800.227.2345

Is Any Type of Tobacco Product Safe?

There are many forms of tobacco on the market. People often think some of these are safe and don't cause health problems. This isn't true.

There is no safe form of tobacco.

Tobacco products like e-cigarettes, pipes, cigars, hookahs, heat-not-burn cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, and other products you put in your mouth have some of the same harmful chemicals as regular cigarettes. Because most of these products come from tobacco leaves, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) considers them "tobacco products."

Tobacco hurts and kills people. More than 480,000 people die each year from tobacco-related diseases. Staying tobacco free is the best way to protect your health and the health of those around you.

- [Regular \(combustible\) cigarettes](#)
- [Light, hand-rolled, natural, or herbal cigarettes](#)
- [Menthol cigarettes](#)
- [Cigars and little cigars](#)
- [Hookah \(water pipes\)](#)
- [Electronic or e-cigarettes \(vaping devices\)](#)
- [Cannabis \(marijuana\)](#)
- [Clove cigarettes \(kreteks\) and bidis \(flavored cigarettes\)](#)
- [Learn more](#)

Regular (combustible) cigarettes

Regular cigarettes (called *combustible cigarettes*) have tobacco, added chemicals, a

filter, and a paper covering. When you smoke them, you expose yourself to [over 7,000 chemicals](#)¹ from inhaling the smoke. People around you are also exposed to the same chemicals through [secondhand or thirdhand smoke](#)².

Cigarette smoking accounts for almost all tobacco-related illnesses and deaths in the United States.

Light, hand-rolled, natural, or herbal cigarettes

Research on menthol cigarettes has shown that:

- Menthol is associated with a more pleasant smoking experience.
- People who start smoking menthol are likely to switch to regular cigarettes.
- Young people who smoke menthol cigarettes are more likely to become addicted to cigarettes.
- People who smoke menthol cigarettes are likely to have a harder time quitting smoking.

Cigars and little cigars

One large cigar can have as much tobacco as an entire pack of cigarettes. And cigar

to your health.

People who smoke cigars are 4 to 10 times more likely to die from cancers of the mouth, throat, larynx, and esophagus than people who don't smoke cigars. The same is likely also true for cancer of the pancreas. For those who inhale, cigar smoking may also increase the risk of cancer of the bladder.

Smoking more cigars each day or inhaling cigar smoke leads to more exposure and higher health risks. The health risks linked to occasional cigar smoking (less than daily) are less clear. Like cigarettes, cigars give off _____

Hookahs put out [secondhand smoke](#)⁵ from both the tobacco and the burning charcoal used as a heat source. People who go to hookah lounges are exposed to high levels of secondhand smoke and other indoor air pollutants which can cause health problems.

Electronic or e-cigarettes (vaping devices)

Using electronic or e-cigarettes is often called vaping. The liquid in these devices is heated and creates an aerosol of tiny particles (sometimes called a "vapor") that is inhaled by users. Although the term "vapor" may make it sound harmless, it is not water vapor.

E-cigarette aerosol most often includes nicotine and other substances that are addictive and can cause lung disease, heart disease, and cancer. It also includes propylene glycol, plus flavor ingredients which can be harmful.

While e-cigarettes are still new, health problems are being found in people who use them. [Use of e-cigarettes](#)⁶ has been linked to nicotine addiction, heart and lung problems, and even seizures. More research is needed over a longer period of time to know what the long-term health effects may be.

Cannabis (marijuana)

The effects of cannabis depend on how long you use it. In the short term, [cannabis use](#)⁷ mostly affects your emotions and mental abilities. But smoking cannabis (or inhaling it as vapor) over a long period of time can have long-term effects on your heart and lungs.

Cannabis smoke and vapor has many of the same chemicals found in tobacco. Also, using cannabis during pregnancy has been linked to low birth weight in babies.

Clove cigarettes (kreteks) and bidis (flavored cigarettes)

Clove cigarettes, also called kreteks (KREE-teks), and bidis have been banned in the US as a part of the Family Smoking Cigarettes with Flavors of Tobacco Cigarettes Act of 2009. Flavored cigarettes are not allowed to be sold in the US.

Tobacco addiction is both mental and physical. For most people, the best way to quit is

lavage fluid associated with EVALI. *New Eng J Med.* 2020;382:697-705.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Cannabis health effects. 2024. Accessed at <https://www.cdc.gov/cannabis/health-effects/index.html> on October 29, 2024.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Smoking & Tobacco Use. *Electronic Cigarettes (Vapes)*. Accessed at <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/e-cigarettes/index.html> on October 10, 2024. National Cancer Institute. Harms of Cigarette Smoking and Health Benefits of Quitting. Accessed at <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/tobacco/cessation-fact-sheet#are-other-tobacco-products-such-as-smokeless-tobacco-or-pipe-tobacco-harmful-and-addictive> on October 4, 2024.

National Cancer Institute. “Light” Cigarettes and Cancer Risk. Accessed at <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/tobacco/light-cigarettes-fact-sheet> on October 4, 2024.

Nuryunarsih D, Lewis S, Langley T. Health Risks of Kretek Cigarettes: A Systematic Review. *Nicotine Tob Res.* 2021;23(8):1274-1282. doi:10.1093/ntr/ntab016

US Food and Drug Administration. *Products, Ingredients & Components*. Accessed at <https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/products-guidance-regulations/products-ingredients-components> on September 25, 2024.

<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/acs-medical-content-and-news-staff.html>)

Our team is made up of doctors and oncology certified nurses with deep knowledge of cancer care as well as editors and translators with extensive experience in medical writing.

American Cancer Society medical information is copyrighted material. For reprint requests, please see our Content Usage Policy (www.cancer.org/about-us/policies/content-usage.html).

cancer.org | 1.800.227.2345