



CIGARS MYTHS & REALITIES

Myth: Cigar smoking is safe since you don't inhale.

Reality: Even if you don't directly inhale cigar smoke, **nicotine and other carcinogens are still absorbed through the lining of the mouth** and easily absorbed through saliva.¹ And, you're still breathing in secondhand smoke from cigars. No level of exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke is safe.²

Cigar smoke may contain more toxins than cigarette smoke due to the quantity of tobacco being burned and the longer smoking time.³

Myth: Cigars are safer than cigarettes because they are natural.

Reality: Cigar smoke contains high levels of cancer-causing substances, tar, and toxins. Cigar smoking causes cancer of the oral cavity, larynx, esophagus, and lung...not to mention heart disease.³

Visit kickitca.org for free help quitting.

Myth: You can't get addicted to cigars.

Reality: Nicotine is naturally occurring in tobacco. High levels of nicotine (the chemical that causes addiction) are absorbed into a smoker's bloodstream through the lining of the mouth and by inhaling smoke into the lungs.¹ **A single cigar can provide as much nicotine as a pack of cigarettes.**⁴

Myth: "I don't smoke cigars everyday so they're not that bad."

Reality: Some large cigars contain as much tobacco as a pack of cigarettes. All tobacco products are harmful and cause cancer. There is no safe level of tobacco use.¹

Myth: Occasional cigar use doesn't impact military performance.

Reality: Smoking tobacco has **serious implications for military readiness.**⁵

- Reduced physical work capacity and endurance
- Lower oxygen capacity and exercise duration
- Lower PT test scores
- Impaired night vision
- Higher absenteeism

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1. National Cancer Institute. (2017). Cigar Smoking and Cancer Fact Sheet. Retrieved from <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/tobacco/cigars-fact-sheet#r3>.

2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2006). The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

3. National Cancer Institute. (1998). Smoking and Tobacco Control Monograph 9: Cigars: Health Effects and Trends. Bethesda, MD.

4. Baker F, Ainsworth SR, Dye JT, et al. (2000). Health risks associated with cigar smoking. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 284(6), 734-740.

5. Bray RM, Spira JL, Olmsted KR, & Hout JJ. (2010). Behavioral and occupational fitness. *Military Medicine*, 175(84), 39-56.