

# CIGARS MYTHS & REALITIES

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**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.<sup>1</sup> And, you're still breathing in secondhand smoke from cigars. No level of exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke is safe.<sup>2</sup> **Cigar smoke may contain more toxins than cigarette smoke** due to the quantity of tobacco being burned and the longer smoking time.<sup>3</sup>

**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.<sup>3</sup>

**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.<sup>1</sup> **A single cigar can provide as much nicotine as a pack of cigarettes.**<sup>4</sup>

**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.<sup>1</sup>

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

**Reality:** Smoking tobacco has **serious implications for military readiness.**<sup>5</sup>

- 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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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.

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