



HOOKAH MYTHS & REALITIES

Myth: The water cleans the smoke.

Reality: After the smoke passes through the water in a hookah pipe, **the smoke still contains high levels of toxins** including carbon monoxide, heavy metals, nicotine, and other cancer-causing chemicals.¹

Myth: Hookah is safer than cigarettes.

Reality: Hookah smoking can be just as dangerous as smoking cigarettes. **A 20-80 minute hookah session is the same as smoking 100 or more cigarettes.**²

Myth: Hookah tobacco has no nicotine.

Reality: Nicotine is a naturally occurring chemical in tobacco.³ Therefore, the tobacco smoked in a hookah pipe has nicotine.^{2,4}

Myth: Hookah tobacco is natural.

Reality: Currently, there is no way of knowing what chemicals are added to hookah tobacco.⁵ Regardless, a single session of smoking hookah delivers 1.7 times the nicotine, 8.4 times the carbon monoxide, and 36 times the tar of a single cigarette.⁶

Myth: People who smoke hookah aren't smokers.

Reality: You don't have to be a cigarette user to be a "smoker". **If you smoke tobacco, you are a smoker.** And, if you currently smoke hookah but not cigarettes, you are two times more likely to become a cigarette smoker than someone who does not smoke hookah.⁷

**Quit tobacco today, call
1-800-NO-BUTTS
for free help.**

© 2016, California Youth Advocacy Network. This material was made possible by funds received from the California Department of Public Health, under contract #14-10013.

1. Aljarrah, K., Ababneh, Z. Q., & Al-Delaimy, W. K. (2009). Perceptions of hookah smoking harmfulness: predictors and characteristics among current hookah users. *Tobacco Induced Diseases*, 5(1), 16. doi:10.1186/1617-9625-5-16
2. World Health Organization. (2005). Waterpipe Tobacco Smoking: Health Effects, Research Needs and Recommended Actions by Regulators. Retrieved May 8, 2015 from http://www.who.int/tobacco/global_interaction/tobreg/waterpipe/en/
3. Office of the Surgeon General. (1988). The Health Consequences of Smoking: Nicotine Addiction: A Report of the Surgeon General. Rockville, MD: Office of the Surgeon General.
4. American Lung Association. (2007) An Emerging Deadly Trend: Waterpipe Tobacco Use. Washington, D.C.: American Lung Association.
5. McDaniel, P., Solomon, G., & Malone, R. E. (2005). The Tobacco Industry and Pesticide Regulations: Case Studies from Tobacco Industry Archives. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 113, 1659-1665
6. Cobb, C., Ward, K. D., Maziak, W., Shihadeh, A. L., & Eissenberg, T. (2010). Waterpipe Tobacco Smoking: An Emerging Health Crisis in the United States. *American Journal of Health Behavior*, 34(3), 275-285.
7. Rice, V. H., Weglicki, L. S., Templin, T., Hammad, A., Jamil, H., & Kulwicki, A. (2006). Predictors of Arab American Adolescent Tobacco Use. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly* (Wayne State University Press), 52(2), 327-342.