

NICOTINE

Found In

The Tobacco plant and Tobacco products, e.g. cigarettes, cigars. Also in nicotine chewing gum, adhesive skin patches.

Also Known As

Ash, Cigs, Ciggies, Fags, Rolly, Smokes, Tabs and many more.

Description

Nicotine is a mild stimulant, which is only naturally found in tobacco leaves. It vaporises into the smoke whenever tobacco is burnt.

Routes of Use

Smoked, ingested, absorbed through the skin or passively.

History

Christopher Columbus brought a few tobacco leaves and seeds with him back to Europe, but most Europeans didn't get their first taste of tobacco until the mid-16th century when diplomats like France's Jean Nicot (from which nicotine is named) began to popularise it's use. Tobacco was introduced to France in 1556, Portugal in 1558, Spain in 1559 and Britain in 1565. It is now estimated that 1 person dies every 10 seconds from tobacco use.

Effects People Seek

An increase in pulse rate and blood pressure while regular smokers experience satisfaction on inhaling first time users may feel dizzy or sick, some people believe it suppresses the appetite, which can help with weight loss, but this doesn't work. Regular smokers often say that smoking helps them to feel relaxed, cope with a stressful situation by reducing their anxiety, aids their concentration, and combats boredom. Most young people who smoke believe it makes them look sophisticated and sociable. Nicotine is a drug with complex effects on brain activity. It is absorbed from the lungs rapidly enough for each inhalation to have an almost immediate and separate effect. These effects can last up to 30 minutes.

Other Effects

Smelly breath, clothes and rooms, disease to the major organs of the body, foetal damage and cancer. It is now becoming socially unacceptable to smoke in public places because of passive smoking.

Dependence & Tolerance

Marked tolerance rapidly develops to the effects of nicotine. The most striking aspect of tobacco use is the extent of dependence and regular use. People who begin to smoke tend to increase their consumption until they smoke regularly. If they cease, they may feel restless, irritable and depressed. Large tobacco corporations have had to admit that nicotine is addictive – a fact they have known for many years but kept secret.

The Law

It is not illegal in this country to buy, possess or use nicotine at any age. However, it is against the law for any shopkeeper to sell tobacco products to anyone that they know to be under 16 years of age.