

## Q: What is hookah?

A hookah is a water pipe used to smoke tobacco through cooled water.

The tobacco, often called shisha, is specially made for hookahs and comes in many flavors such as cherry, bubble gum, and cappuccino. The tobacco is heated in a bowl at the top of the hookah and the smoke is filtered through the water in the base of the hookah. It is then drawn through a hose to the mouthpiece.

Hookah is known by other names including narghile, shisha, goza, and hubbly bubbly.

### HOOKAH IS JUST AS HAZARDOUS AS CIGARETTES

Hookah has many of the same health risks as cigarettes and is a growing problem among youth.

More 12th graders in Washington State report using hookah—an increase from 13% in 2008 to 17% in 2012 (Healthy Youth Survey, 30-day use data).



## Resources

**American Cancer Society**  
<http://www.acscan.org/pdf/smokefree/hookah-facts.pdf>

**American Lung Association**  
<http://www.lung.org/stop-smoking/tobacco-control-advocacy/reports-resources/cessation-economic-benefits/reports/hookah-policy-brief.pdf>

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
[http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/tobacco\\_industry/hookahs/](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/tobacco_industry/hookahs/)

**King County, Washington**  
<http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/tobacco/facts/hookahs.aspx>

**Project WATCH**  
<http://www.ansrmn.org/fckfiles/file/Hookah%20Factsheet.pdf>

**TobaccoFreeU.org (the Bacchus Network)**  
<http://www.tobaccofreeu.org/pdf/HookahWhitePaper.pdf>

**Washington State Department of Health**  
<http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/5500/RPF-Tob2012.pdf>

**World Health Organization**  
[http://www.who.int/tobacco/global\\_interaction/tobreg/Waterpipe%20recommendation\\_Final.pdf](http://www.who.int/tobacco/global_interaction/tobreg/Waterpipe%20recommendation_Final.pdf)



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# Hookah Smoking

Just as hazardous to your health as cigarettes.

Get the facts.



# Common Questions



## Q: Is hookah smoking addictive?

Yes. Nicotine, the addictive chemical in tobacco, can make people addicted to hookah. Hookah users tend to inhale deeper and keep the smoke in their lungs longer because hookah smoke is heavily flavored with molasses, fruit, and other ingredients, and because it is cooled as it passes through water. This provides more time for nicotine to be absorbed into the system.

## Q: Is hookah use legal?

Just like cigarettes, hookah use is **not allowed** inside public places and workplaces, or within 25 feet of doors, windows, and vents (Smoking in Public Places law, RCW 70.160). You must be 18 years or older to buy or smoke hookah.



## Q: What are the health risks of hookah smoking?

While research about hookah smoking is still emerging, evidence shows that it poses many dangers:

- Hookah smoke contains high levels of **carbon monoxide (CO)**. Hookah often uses charcoal to heat the tobacco, which can cause **CO poisoning**. CO is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death. The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion.
- Hookah smoke also contains high levels of **tar, heavy metals, and cancer-causing chemicals**. In fact, hookah smokers are exposed to more CO and smoke than are cigarette smokers.
- The **secondhand smoke** from a hookah is dangerous to others in the room or home (it is as dangerous for your friends and family members as smoking a cigarette inside your home or in the car).
- As with cigarette smoking, hookah smoking is linked to **lung, mouth, throat, and stomach cancers, heart disease, lung disease, and decreased fertility**.
- Hookah smoking by pregnant women can result in **low birth weight babies**.
- Hookah pipes used in hookah bars and cafes may not be cleaned properly, risking the **spread of infectious diseases** such as tuberculosis, hepatitis, and meningitis.

One hour of smoking hookah typically involves inhaling **100-200 times the volume** of smoke inhaled from a single cigarette.

## Q: Is hookah smoking safer than smoking cigarettes? I've been told that the water used in the hookah makes the tobacco less toxic.

Hookah smoking is **not** safer than cigarette smoking. The tobacco is no less toxic in a hookah pipe, and the water in the hookah does not filter out the toxic ingredients in the tobacco smoke. Even though hookah smoke feels less harsh because it is cooled by water, it has the same risks as cigarette smoke. Hookah smokers may actually inhale more tobacco smoke than cigarette smokers do because of the large volume of smoke they inhale.



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