

# Hookah/Shisha

## THE BIG MYTH



[paul.zemann@kingcounty.go](mailto:paul.zemann@kingcounty.go)

Public Health  
Seattle & King County







**One hour of hookah smoking  
is equivalent to inhaling  
up to 200 cigarettes.**



source: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)



# Tobacco is Tobacco

Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death in the world

5.4 million deaths each year

Hookah is **NOT** a safe alternative to cigarette smoking!

# MYTH

Hookah smoke is not as bad as  
cigarette smoke

**FALSE!**

11 times more carbon monoxide in  
hookah smoke than cigarette smoke

69 different carcinogens in hookah  
smoke

# MYTH

Cigarette smoking is more addictive

FALSE!

More than 90% of beginning hookah users believe cigarette smoking is more addictive

4 times more nicotine in hookah tobacco

Hookah smoke is less harmful because smoke passes through water which acts as a filter

**FALSE!**

The water cools the smoke which causes the smoker to inhale deeper



# MYTH

I don't do it everyday so I won't get addicted

**FALSE!**

Volume of smoke inhaled in one session is 100-200 times the volume of a single cigarette

More smoke is inhaled over a longer period of time

# MYTH


There is no tar in hookah tobacco  
so that makes it safer to use

# FALS

# E!

Hookah **tobacco** contains no tar

Hookah **smoke** contains 100 times more tar than  
cigarette smoke



Only people who smoke from a hookah regularly get diseases from the hookah

**FALSE!**

Sharing of mouthpieces increases risk of colds, herpes, oral bacteria infections, hepatitis and even tuberculosis

# Health Risks Associated with Hookah Smoking

8 times more likely to develop lung cancer than non-smokers.

Lip, tongue & Mouth Cancer

Wrinkles

Gum Disease

Cardiovascular Disease

Infertility

Emphysema

Impotence

Herpes

Larynx cancer

Tuberculosis

Esophagus cancer

Hepatitis

# HIV/AIDS RISK

**Matthew Golden, MD**

Professor, Division of Allergy and Infectious  
Diseases

University of Washington

Director, PHSKC STD Control Program

"I think that there is no known risk of contracting HIV via a hookah pipe and that this should not be identified as a risk for HIV transmission"



# Secondhand smoke

Because of the smoke from the tobacco and charcoal, secondhand hookah smoke is dangerous

~American Lung Association

Hookah smoking in public  
places or places of employment  
is illegal-

Washington Smoking in Public  
Places Law 2005