

## Tobacco

**Cigarettes, fags, ciggies, smokes, baccy, leaf**

### What is tobacco?

Tobacco is the dried leaves of the plant that grow in many parts of the world. The main active ingredient is nicotine.

Most tobacco used in this country comes from America and is sold as cigarettes. Cigars and pipe tobacco are made from stronger, darker tobacco. Snuff is powdered tobacco that is sniffed up the nose.

Tobacco is often used when making cannabis cigarettes or joints. Both rolling tobacco and tobacco removed from packet cigarettes are mixed with resin or herbal cannabis and rolled into cigarette papers.



Since 1st July 2007, smoking in virtually all enclosed public places and workplaces has been banned throughout the UK and from the 1st October 2007 the cigarette buying age has been raised to 18. The legal age for buying tobacco is now the same as for alcohol.

### UK situation

In 2001, 27% of adults aged 16 and over smoked cigarettes in England; 28% of men and 25% of women. In 2002, 10% of children aged 11-15 smoked cigarettes regularly; 9% of boys and 11% of girls. More than 120,000 deaths were caused by smoking in the UK in 1995; that is, one in five of all deaths. [1]

In 2002-2003, 54,737 million cigarettes were released in the UK for consumption – 48,606 million home produced and 6,132 million imported. [2]

### History

The first recorded examples of tobacco smoking were from the Mexican Maya civilisation in about 500 AD. It was first brought to England in the second part of the 16th century by Sir Walter Raleigh. By the early 1600s it was sold in specialist tobacconist shops, grocers and drapers. Many Europeans made extravagant claims about the use of tobacco to cure a variety of diseases and ailments. Initially smoking tobacco for pleasure was confined to the wealthy classes but its use gradually spread.

In the early 1600s King James and the clergy came out strongly against smoking tobacco and regarded it as a moral and health risk. Rather than attempting to completely ban it the King raised the duty on its importation. Other countries took a more draconian view. Tobacco smoking could be punished by death in Persia or China and by other less drastic, but nonetheless severe physical penalties in Russia and Turkey.

From the late 17th century to early 19th century snuff replaced pipe smoking as the main way tobacco was used in England. Cigar smoking also became more common.

Cigarettes were first introduced to England by troops returning from the Crimean War (1854-86) who had seen French and Turkish soldiers smoking them.

At this time cigarettes were of the roll-your-own variety. By the 1870s English companies started making ready rolled cigarettes but it was not till the 1880s, with the development of automatic machinery, that cigarettes as we know them today became more widely available. Filter tip cigarettes were first introduced in the 1950s.

It was not until the 1960s that tobacco smoking was associated with health problems. Until that time tobacco products were often seen as health enhancing and a good way of relaxing. Smoking was even advertised by famous sportsmen.

Health warnings led to a fall in tobacco consumption in developed countries, increased tax on tobacco products, controls on advertising, low tar varieties and bans on smoking in public places. It has also led to new products and schemes to help people stop smoking including smoking cessation groups, nicotine patches and chewing gums.

Also, it has been revealed that the tobacco companies knew for many years before it became public knowledge that regular smoking was closely linked to cancer. This has led to a number of court cases in the USA from those seeking compensation from the tobacco companies.

## **The law**

It is not illegal to buy, possess or use tobacco products. Since 2003, tobacco advertising and promotion are banned in the UK, following the passage of the Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act in December 2002.

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## **Effects/risks**

Tobacco smoking involves the inhalation of tar, nicotine, carbon monoxide and other gases. Nicotine is a stimulant drug which increases pulse rate and blood pressure. Regular smokers often find smoking combats anxiety and stress, helps concentration and alleviates boredom. Some also find it suppresses appetite. First time users often feel sick, dizzy and suffer headache.

Tolerance develops quickly to the effects of nicotine so more is needed to get an effect. Most people who smoke become dependent and feel restless and anxious if they try to stop. Very few people find they can just have the occasional cigarette. They tend to either smoke a number a day or not smoke at all.

Regular, long term smoking greatly increases the risk of a number of serious diseases including lung and other cancers, heart diseases, bronchitis, bad circulation and ulcers. About 120,000 people die prematurely in the UK each year through smoking related diseases [3].

Women who smoke cigarettes during pregnancy tend to give birth to babies of smaller birth weight. Smoking whilst taking oral contraceptives ('the pill') increases the risk of heart and circulatory problems.

Recent research has also shown that smoking can damage non-smokers who inhale tobacco fumes. It is now well established in the literature that the population is at risk from the effects of passive smoking, ranging from respiratory irritations, infections and asthma (especially children) through to cancer.

ASH estimates that, each year in the UK, about 600 lung cancer deaths and up to 12,000 deaths from heart disease in non-smokers may be attributed to passive smoking [4].

## **References**

1. Source: DoH Statistical Bulletin 2003/21: Statistics on smoking: England, 2003.
2. Source: Customs & Excise Annual Report, 1999-2000. The Stationery Office, March 2001.
3. Source: [ASH](#), Basic Facts One, January 2003.
4. Source: [Passive smoking: A summary of the evidence.](#) [ASH](#), November 2002

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## Other Sources of information

<p>Local organisations that offer Assessment &amp; Treatment options for people with addictions:</p> <p><b>EDAS</b> – Mental Health and Alcohol &amp; Substance Misuse Support in Poole Tel 01202 735777 <a href="mailto:hello@edasuk.org">hello@edasuk.org</a> <a href="http://www.edasuk.org">www.edasuk.org</a></p> <p><b>EDAS/REACH YP</b> – Free and confidential drug and alcohol service for under 25s who live in the Borough of Poole and County of Dorset Tel 0800 0434656 <a href="http://www.edasuk.org/yp">www.edasuk.org/yp</a></p> <p><b>WE ARE WITH YOU</b> Tel 01202558855 <a href="http://www.wearewithyou.org.uk">www.wearewithyou.org.uk</a></p> <p><b>EDP</b> Tel 01305 571264 <a href="mailto:info@edp.org.uk">info@edp.org.uk</a></p>		<p>National organisations that offer treatment, advice, information &amp; support for people with addictions:</p> <p><b>ALCOHOL CHANGE</b> Tel 020 3907 8480 <a href="http://www.alcoholchange.org.uk">www.alcoholchange.org.uk</a></p> <p><b>FRANK</b> Tel 0300 1236600 Text 82111 <a href="http://www.talktofrank.com">www.talktofrank.com</a></p>
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