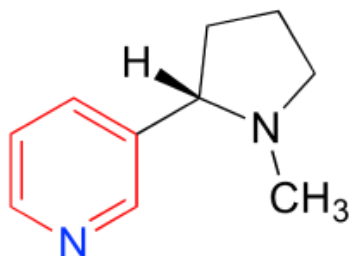


Facts about nicotine



Addiction: When people start vaping or using other tobacco products, the nicotine prompts the release of dopamine and other feel-good chemicals in the brain. However, over time, more nicotine is required to achieve the same effect. The user becomes dependent on the chemical, and short periods of abstinence from nicotine can result in strong cravings and heightened levels of stress. Sometimes chemical dependence (addiction) happens within a few days or weeks. Symptoms may even develop before the person becomes a daily user.

The body may also become less able to release dopamine on its own. That can have a negative effect on moods, stress response, sleep, mental focus, pain response, etc.

Brain development: Nicotine has additional detrimental effects on development of the prefrontal cortex of the brain, which is not complete until about age 25. This can result in reduced ability to think rationally and solve problems.

Cardiovascular system: The harmful effects of nicotine are not limited to the brain. The drug constricts blood vessels, causing the heart to work harder and reducing blood flow and oxygen to organs throughout the body. Nicotine also increases the risk of cardiovascular diseases, heart attack and stroke.

Respiratory system: Nicotine and the other chemicals in “vapes,” cigarettes, hookah, “heat-not-burn” products, snus, chewing tobacco, etc., can damage the lungs, esophagus, and other parts of the respiratory system.

Overall effects: The combined mental and physical effects reduce the ability of the user to engage in many satisfying activities. The person may lack the physical strength and endurance that he or she desires, and be more prone to viral and bacterial infections. Over time, some of the chemicals can cause DNA damage, leading to cancer.

Nicotine dependence also affects daily routines and changes the way the user interacts with other people. He or she may lose interest in hobbies, social groups, sports, etc.

Quitting nicotine: Sometimes it takes more than one quit attempt, but quitting provides important benefits. Over time, many of the harmful effects of the chemicals may reverse or diminish substantially. Quitting as soon as possible provides the greatest benefits.

Asking friends, parents and others for emotional support can help. Thousands of young people have also found help by texting DITCH JUUL to 88709 . Persons age 16 or older can also receive free coaching by calling the Nebraska Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669).

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