

The act of smoking:

Cigarettes are mostly made of tobacco, and one of the main ingredients in tobacco is nicotine. Nicotine is a powerful drug that speeds up the brain and central nervous system. It triggers the release of a chemical in your brain (dopamine) that boosts your mood, makes you feel calm, and at the same time, can make you feel more alert. The nicotine level in your blood peaks (gets at the highest level of itself) within only 10 seconds of inhaling (breathing in) cigarette smoke into your lungs.

Over time, your brain adjusts to the stimulation ("buzz") from nicotine and lowers your natural energy level or mood. You may then start to crave a cigarette for a boost. The more you smoke the more nicotine you need to feel good. Soon, your body craves nicotine to feel "normal." Being without nicotine for even a few hours can cause withdrawal symptoms like headaches, depression, anger, anxiety, and problems sleeping.

Withdrawal symptoms last about a week for most people. You can cope with them by knowing what to expect and finding other ways to handle cravings before you quit. Withdrawal symptoms are a sign that your body is healing. They won't last forever.

The advantages of smoking:

- 1- Peer group acceptance if peers smoke
- 2- Effective weight loss aid
- 3- Performance enhancement in tasks requiring concentration
- 4- Stress relief
- 5- Some smokers truly enjoy the taste

There are issues with most of these perceived advantages. If a smoker attempts to change peer groups, they could find smoking to be a barrier to acceptance. The performance enhancement is minimal after the first few cigarettes a smoker has in their lifetime; from that point on, it is just a perception of enhancement based on the memory of those initial cigarettes. Weight loss and stress relief could be as effectively obtained by other, healthier means. Therefore the only valid advantage is if a smoker really enjoys the taste, but one has to wonder if they don't enjoy the taste of the cigarette merely because they cannot taste anything else.

The disadvantages of smoking:

- 1- Death from disease caused by smoking
- 2- Diseases (even if they don't cause death)
- 3- Lung Cancer

- 4- Throat Cancer
- 5- Mouth Cancer (& also kidney & Esophagus)
- 6- Many other types of cancer also been linked to tobacco use
- 7- Emphysema
- 8- COPD
- 9- Asthma
- 10- Decreased lung function
- 11- Advanced signs of aging
- 12- Cost of cigarettes, applicable taxes and paraphernalia such as lighters
- 13- Decreased acceptance by non-smoking peers
- 14- The lingering odor of smoke on body and clothing
- 15- Lowered ability to exercise due to inability to breathe
- 16- Cost of stop-smoking aids when the decision to quit is made

It is clear that the disadvantages of smoking far outweigh any perceived advantages. While there is a cost associated with quitting, over time the damage smoking had done to the body can reverse itself if a person ceases tobacco use. This puts that cost into perspective, especially when compared to the thousands of dollars spent every year on smoking. With all the disadvantages to continued smoking and no real advantages to it, isn't it time you saved your health and your money by putting in the effort to become tobacco-free?

Collected by

Pedram Shakerinava

2013/01/25 Friday