

# TOBACCO

Smoked, chewed or inhaled through second-hand smoke, tobacco constitutes a public health hazard. Tobacco contains 4,000 chemicals including nicotine of which 40 are known cancer-causing agents. They trigger a variety of reactions, ranging from minor irritations and headaches to allergic reactions and angina symptoms. Nicotine interacts with other drugs and may reduce their effects or increase their associated health risks. Smokers have an increased risk of stroke and ulcers. Women are further disadvantaged by nicotine's effect on the body's estrogen, which may contribute to early menopause and osteoporosis.

*Signs of intoxication: dizziness, tenseness nausea, vomiting (in first time users).*

*Withdrawal symptoms: Irritability, tenseness, anxiety, difficulty in concentrating, craving for the drug, increase appetite and insomnia.*

## EFFECTS OF CHRONIC ABUSE

Dependency. Nicotine has a potent effect on many systems of the body, the impact on health being quite complex. It poses a cancer threat to the lungs, mouth pharynx, esophagus, bladder, pancreas, kidney and uterine cervix.

- *Central Nervous System:* Stimulates activities.
- *Heart and Blood:* Increase heart rate and heart contractions. High blood pressure.
- *Lungs:* Lung cancer; increase risk of bronchitis and other infections. Destroys lung architecture.
- *Stomach:* Weaker contractions; excess production of stomach acid.
- *Sexual organs:* Fertility may be impaired.
- *Fetus:* Reduced blood flow to the uterus and oxygen flow to the fetus. Increased fetal heart rate. Evidence of lung, skeletal and cardiovascular abnormalities. Increased incidence of spontaneous abortion and premature birth even with passive smoke: traces of

nicotine found in breast milk. Higher risk of cancer in later life. Delay development, smaller brain and overall weight deficit; linked to difficulties in reading and mathematical skills, lower IQ's and increased prevalence of ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder).