

# WATER-PIPE SMOKING AND YOUR HEALTH



Health

## Water-pipe tobacco is not a safe alternative to cigarettes

The smoke from a water-pipe, like all smoking products, endangers the health of smokers and of others exposed to it.

Water-pipe smoke still contains high levels of toxic substances, even after it has been bubbled through water.

Since most water-pipe smoking sessions last longer than smoking a cigarette, water-pipe smokers can absorb a larger amount of toxins. A water-pipe smoker may breathe in as much smoke during a typical one-hour session as a cigarette smoker would inhale from 100-200 cigarettes.

The wood cinders or charcoal used to burn water-pipe tobacco also increase health risks and add harmful substances to water-pipe smoke including carbon monoxide, metals and cancer-causing chemicals.

## Water-pipe non-tobacco products are not safe to smoke

The smoking of non-tobacco products in a water-pipe is not safe. While these products may not contain the nicotine found in tobacco, the smoke contains highly toxic substances. The addition of fruit flavouring and sweeteners does not reduce the harmful effects of the smoke.

Many water-pipe smokers do not realise that *all* water-pipe smoke, whether from tobacco or non-tobacco products, is harmful to their health.

## There are health risks associated with inhaling water-pipe smoke

Water-pipe smokers face the same health risks as cigarette smokers, including cancers, heart disease, lung disease and problems in pregnancy such as low birth weight.

Infectious diseases can also be spread through sharing water-pipes. While some water-pipe cafés provide new pipe mouth pieces for each patron, the hose is still shared and can transmit infection.

## What is a water-pipe?

A water-pipe is a smoking device also known as *nargila*, *argileh*, *hubble bubble*, *hookah*, *shisha* and *goza*.

It is made up of four parts: the head, body, bowl and hose. A smoker breathes in through the mouthpiece in the hose. Smoke is drawn from the head, down the body, through water in the bowl and into the mouth.



## Water-pipe smoking is addictive

Water-pipe tobacco smoke contains nicotine which is a highly addictive drug.

## Second-hand smoke from water-pipe smoking is a cause for concern

Water-pipe smoke poses a risk for non-smokers who inhale second-hand smoke, even in outdoor areas.

Breathing in second-hand tobacco smoke can increase the risk of heart disease, lung cancer and other lung diseases in adults. It can also worsen the effects of illnesses such as asthma and bronchitis. Ex-smokers exposed to other people's tobacco smoke have an increased chance of relapsing to smoking.

Inhaling second-hand tobacco smoke is even more dangerous for children. Children's airways are smaller and their immune systems are less developed, making them more likely to suffer health problems such as bronchitis, pneumonia and asthma due to second-hand smoke.

### Laws on smoking in public buildings and outdoor areas apply to water-pipe

NSW smoke-free laws for indoor and outdoor public places relate to the smoking of any ignited tobacco product or non-tobacco product, including water-pipe.

An increasing number of countries are banning indoor smoking, including water-pipe smoking. These countries include Lebanon, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and India, where water-pipe smoking has a stronger tradition.

Smoking is also banned in New South Wales in selected outdoor public places where people

queue or gather including entrances or exits to a public building, public transport stops, spectator areas of sports grounds, swimming pool complexes and near children's play equipment.

From 6 July 2015 these smoking bans will extend to commercial outdoor dining areas and within four metres of the entrances to/exits from cafés, restaurants, clubs and hotels.

### Laws on the sale of tobacco apply to water-pipe

The packaging and sale of tobacco and non-tobacco products must comply with NSW laws on retailing under the *Public Health Tobacco Act 2008*.

#### For more information

Learn more about smoke-free laws or report a breach at [health.nsw.gov.au/smokefree](http://health.nsw.gov.au/smokefree).

Call the Tobacco Information Line on **1800 357 412**.

Non-English speaker? Call the Translating and Interpreting Service on **13 14 50**.

Call the Quitline on **13 78 48**.

Quitline in other languages:

Arabic **1300 7848 03**

Chinese **1300 7848 36**

Vietnamese **1300 7848 65**