

The Health Risks of Cigar Smoking

We have all heard of the risks associated with smoking cigarettes, but what are the risks of cigar smoking? Are the risks of smoking cigars just as dangerous, or more so? According to the National Cancer Instituted, regular cigar smoking can result in a major health threat. Scientific research has linked cigar smoking with cancers of the larynx, lungs, esophagus, and oral cavity. Newer research also indicates that cigar smoking may be strongly linked to the development of cancer in the pancreas. Doctors also caution that individuals who regularly inhale while enjoying a cigar are also at greater risk of developing lung disease and heart problems.

The health threats of cigar smoking appear to increase dramatically in those individuals who smoke regularly and inhale while smoking. Someone who smokes three to four cigars each day will him or herself at eight times the risk of developing some kind of oral cancer than a nonsmoker. Unfortunately, we do not yet know the health risks of smoking the occasional cigar. It seems clear however that smoking cigars on a daily basis can pose serious health risks.

Many individuals wonder if cigars are as addictive as cigarettes. Many wonder why, for instance, so many people become addicted to cigarettes, and not cigars? The truth is that any tobacco product can become addictive because it contains nicotine. Witness the effects of smokeless tobacco products on individuals. These products, such as chewing tobacco, can become very addictive, simply because they contain tobacco, which in turn contains nicotine. Many cigar smokers do not inhale deeply, thus causing the nicotine to be inhaled superficially. Cigarette smokers tend to inhale, causing the nicotine to be absorbed faster and more readily by the lungs. Even though most cigar smokers inhale the nicotine more superficially, it is still possible to become addicted if the user smokes cigars on a regular basis.

If nicotine is so addictive, why don't more cigar smokers smoke more often? It appears that more people avoid becoming 'hooked' on cigars for several reasons. The most obvious reason is that the nicotine is inhaled much more superficially than in regular cigarette smoking, causing less nicotine to be absorbed by the body. Also, cigars are not as readily accessible as cigarettes. They are viewed by most as a luxury item, saved for special occasions and used infrequently. However, when cigars are smoked on a regular basis, they can become addictive. The health risks of any kind of smoking increase dramatically as frequency of use increases.

