

CIGARS ARE NOT A SAFE ALTERNATIVE TO CIGARETTES



**Front of Cigar Package
(representation only)**



**Back of Cigar Package
(representation only)**

Smoking cigars can cause cancer and other tobacco-related illnesses. Smoking cigars is not a safe alternative to smoking cigarettes.^{1,2}

The health risks associated with both cigars and cigarettes are strongly linked to the amount of smoke exposure. The different health risks between those who smoke cigars and cigarettes are likely to be related simply to differences in daily use and level of inhalation, as the composition of the smoke from cigars and cigarettes includes many of the same toxic and cancer causing compounds.³

Studies show that smokers who have switched from cigarettes to cigars are more likely to inhale cigar smoke into their lungs. Cigar smokers who inhale are at a much higher risk for all major smoking related diseases.^{1,2}

For people who smoke five cigars a day and moderately inhale the smoke, their lung cancer risk is comparable to that from smoking up to one pack of cigarettes a day.³

Cigar smokers have a similar level of risk for oral, throat and oesophageal cancers to that of cigarette smokers.^{1,2} Whether or not they inhale, all cigar and cigarette smokers directly expose the lips, mouth, tongue, throat and larynx to smoke and its carcinogens. Even holding an unlit cigar between the lips will expose these areas to carcinogens.³

Cigars and cigarettes differ in the size and type of tobacco used. Cigarettes tend to be more uniform in size and contain less than one gram of tobacco each, whereas cigars vary in size and shape. Large cigars typically contain between five and 17 times the amount of tobacco

as cigarettes. *Some premium cigars contain the same amount of tobacco as an entire pack of cigarettes.*^{1,3}

The smoke from the burning tip of the cigar produces more toxic and cancer causing compounds than cigarette smoke when equal amounts of tobacco from cigarettes and cigars are burnt.² Compared to a cigarette, a large cigar releases up to 20 times more ammonia, five to 10 times more cadmium (a cancer-causing metal) and a cancer-causing agent called methylethyl nitrosamine, plus around 80 to 90 times more of the carcinogenic tobacco-specific nitrosamines.^{1,4}

Cigarettes have an average nicotine content of about 8.4 milligrams. Many brands of cigars contain at least 10 to 20 times that amount and some can contain 50 times the amount of nicotine as cigarettes.³

When cigar and cigarette smokers inhale, the nicotine is absorbed rapidly. For cigar smokers who do not inhale, the nicotine is still absorbed – predominantly through the lining of the mouth rather than through the lung. Nicotine absorbed through the lining of the mouth is still capable of forming a powerful addiction. Both inhaled and non-inhaled nicotine can be addictive.^{1,3}

Decided to quit smoking? For help, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or call the Quitline on 131 848 or visit the Quitline web site at www.quitnow.info.au.

Sources

1. National Cancer Institute. *Cigars: Health effects and trends*, Smoking and Tobacco Control Monograph No. 9; 1998. <http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/tcrb/monographs/9/index.html>
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3. National Cancer Institute. *Cancer Facts*, July 2000. <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Tobacco/cigars>
4. National Cancer Institute News. *Cigar smoking causes several cancers and lung and heart disease*, posted April 10 1998. <http://www.cancer.gov/newscenter/cigar/print?page=&keyword=>