

Smoke-Free Colusa County Monthly

Colusa County Tobacco
Prevention Coalition

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Nicotine & the Body

Today, almost 17% of adults in Colusa County smoke cigarettes.¹ The chemical in cigarettes that causes addiction, which is a primary reason that they are so deadly, is called nicotine. However, nicotine has not always been used solely for its addictive properties. Nicotine originally acted as an insecticide for survival by the plant species *Nicotiana tabacum*, also known as the tobacco plant. Unfortunately, the addictive component of nicotine has since been discovered and exploited.

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addicting.³ Once the nicotine reaches the brain, multiple chemicals are released that impact several different parts of the body.²

When nicotine is absorbed into the blood, it impacts the hormones adrenaline and insulin as well as the

The fastest way to get a drug to the brain is by smoking it—which is one reason cigarettes are so addicting

Once nicotine is inhaled into the lungs, it moves to the smoker's brain within seven to ten seconds.² The fastest way to get a drug to the brain is by smoking it – which is one reason cigarettes are so

neurotransmitter dopamine. Adrenaline is released into the blood, which raises the heart rate and blood pressure of the smoker and restricts blood flow to the

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The Tobacco Prevention Coalition aims to improve the health of Colusa County residents through education and promotion of a tobacco-free lifestyle.

*Smoke-Free
Air
Everywhere*



heart.² Nicotine also blocks the release of insulin from the pancreas, which results in the smoker having higher blood sugar levels and a reduced appetite.² The “feel good” chemical that is released when nicotine is absorbed is called dopamine. The rapid spike in nicotine from an inhaled cigarette provides a paralleled spike in dopamine levels.² This results in the smoker having temporary feelings of happiness. The disadvantage, however, is that this feeling can dissipate in mere minutes and leave the smoker wanting more. As the nicotine levels quickly drop, smokers undergo nicotine withdrawal and feel agitated and uncomfortable.²

Nicotine is a very difficult drug to quit. Nicotine has been shown to be as addictive as heroin, cocaine, or alcohol.⁴ More people in the United States are addicted to nicotine than any other drug.⁴ However, the benefits of quitting smoking far outweigh the struggles of nicotine withdrawals. Within just 20 minutes of quitting smoking, the individual’s blood pressure drops to normal and their pulse slows.⁵ Within 8-24 hours, the carbon monoxide levels in the blood decrease and their chance of a heart attack decreases.⁵ Within 1 year of quitting smoking, the risk for heart disease is cut in half.⁵ Within

10 years the risk for lung cancer is cut in half.⁵

If you or someone you know is interested in quitting smoking, please reach out to the California Smoker’s Helpline at 1-800-NO-BUTTS. They offer free telephone counseling, self-help materials, and online help in six languages that can help you quit smoking. If you are tech savvy, they also offer support through text messages and through a mobile iPhone app called “No Butts.” All of these resources can help you create a personalized quit plan to help through your journey towards a healthier life.

Marijuana & Tobacco Marketing

Honey berry, chocolate, cinnamon roll, and tropical punch are all popular flavors of little cigars and cigarillos that are on the market today.

in individual packages for less than \$1 and are available in a wide variety of youth-appealing flavors. However, did you know that these little

Some flavored products are being marketed with names like Island Madness, Summer Twist, and Moontrance.⁶ Tobacco companies are

While marijuana and tobacco might appear to be two very different products, there is a common crossover in use that is becoming prevalent among youth today

Cigarillos are comprised of a tobacco leaf wrapped around cut tobacco.⁸ They can be sold

cigars and cigarillos are also marketed in flavors that are not recognizable as a taste?

anticipating regulation of their flavored cigar products and creating descriptors that

are not of distinct tastes.⁶ Fruit and candy flavored tobacco products are not the only products that are being branded with these ambiguous names. Tobacco companies are also marketing cigar products with marijuana-related descriptions such as Bluntzilla and Juicy Bluntarillo.⁶

With the rising public acceptance and legalization of marijuana use in California, youth are perceiving marijuana as less harmful. In 2009, over 52% of California high school seniors perceived marijuana as harmful.⁷ However, in 2016, the rate of perceived harm dropped to just 31%.⁷ While marijuana and tobacco might appear to be very different products, there is a common crossover in use that is becoming prevalent among youth today. An increasingly popular way among youth to use marijuana products is in the form of a marijuana blunt.⁸ A marijuana blunt is comprised of a tobacco leaf from a cigarillo that has been emptied of tobacco and refilled with marijuana.⁸ A 2017 study of youth cigarillo smokers reported that 83% of participants used various

brands of cigarillos to smoke as marijuana blunts with an average starting age of just 14 years old.⁸ Both products were reported by youth to be relaxing and relieve stress.⁸

The increasing popularity of marijuana is being recognized by tobacco companies and they are discreetly targeting youth through little cigar and cigarillo marketing near California schools.⁶ Approximately 6 out of 10 little cigar & cigarillo retailers near California schools sold cigar products marketed as blunts, blunt wraps, or with at least one marijuana-related flavor description.⁶ These products are being marketed at rates of 2 cigarillos for less than \$1. Cigarillos are also being sold at cheaper prices in lower income areas of California.⁶ In 2016, over 73% of Colusa County retailers sold Swisher Sweets (a popular brand of cigarillos) for less than \$1.⁹ Flavored cigars and cigarillos are being marketed towards youth at cheap rates and it is working; youth are using these products because they are inexpensive and the flavors hide the taste and smell of marijuana.⁸

It is a common misconception that removing the tobacco from the inside of the wrapper is a healthier and addiction-free alternative; the tobacco leaf still contains nicotine, can pose significant health risks, and can promote nicotine and tobacco dependence.⁸ In addition, regular marijuana use throughout adolescence is associated with changes to the brain in areas that control memory, attention, learning, and impulse control.⁷ Marijuana use among adolescents can also impact their mental health, put them at higher risk for anxiety disorders, and make them more susceptible to addiction later in life.⁷ Marijuana and tobacco products might not appear to have a lot in common, but, when it comes to youth, they are tied very closely together. Recognizing the danger that both tobacco and marijuana products pose towards youth is an important step in providing Colusa County children with a safe and healthy environment.

Upcoming Events

- **November 28th; 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.:** Colusa County Tobacco Prevention Coalition meeting – Join Colusa County community members aiming to improve the health of Colusa County residents through education and promotion of a tobacco-free lifestyle. Lunch provided.

For more information or to R.S.V.P to any of the above events, please contact the Colusa County Tobacco Education Program at TEP@ColusaDHHS.org or 530-458-0380.

Resources

Interested in a meeting or community presentation to learn more about secondhand smoke, thirdhand smoke, tobacco marketing towards youth, or the Colusa County Tobacco Education Program? Contact us directly to schedule an appointment:

[Colusa County Tobacco Education Program](#)
Contact: Amanda Pitts, Project Director
Phone: (530) 458-0380
<http://www.countyofcolusa.org/tobaccoeducation>

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Interested in quitting smoking?



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