

# Spotlight on...

# Tobacco

A NEWSBRIEF OF THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES COUNCIL, INC.



Entertainment  
Industries  
Council, Inc.

## IN THIS ISSUE:

Smoking Is  
Leading Cause of  
Preventable Death in U.S.

Smoking & Sex

Nicotine Lollipops Part of the  
Bigger Tobacco Industry  
Scheme

Smokers Drink &  
Drinkers Smoke

Ways To Beat Nicotine

Don't Be Fooled by the  
Trendy Cigarettes

Tobacco on the Web

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## Smoking Is Leading Preventable Cause of Death in U.S.

*"Cigarette me, big boy..."*

— Ginger Rogers  
in *Young Man of Manhattan* (1930)

In the great films of the 30's, 40's and 50's, the movie stars of the day smoked cigarettes to convey seduction and sensuality. Think of Lauren Bacall and Humphrey Bogart in *To Have and Have Not*. Its most famous scene is played around the lighting of a cigarette. Unfortunately, Humphrey Bogart died of lung cancer.

The consequences of nicotine addiction are staggering. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) research, tobacco kills more than 430,000 Americans yearly. That's more than alcohol, cocaine, heroin, AIDS, homicide, suicide, car crashes, and fire combined.

The average smoker takes 10 – 12 puffs of a cigarette. At the rate of a pack or so per day, that's 200 – 300 puffs per day, 2,000 puffs per week, 8,000 puffs per month, or 100,000 puffs per year. A 20-year smoker will take about 2 million puffs. This is why it's so tough to quit smoking.

When the CEOs of the nation's seven

largest tobacco companies testified in front of the House Subcommittee on Tobacco in 1994, each claimed that, to the best of his knowledge, tobacco was not addictive.

Today, films are showing us the dark side of cigarettes. *The Insider* shows us the truth about tobacco companies: these companies not only knew that tobacco's

**“ We are in the nicotine delivery business. Cigarettes are a delivery device for nicotine. Nicotine is an addictive drug. You put it in your mouth, light it up, and you're gonna get your fix. ”**

**The character of  
Jeffrey Wigand in *The Insider*.**

prime ingredient – nicotine – was addictive, they also enhanced nicotine's affect in order to keep their customers smoking.

All we really have to do is ask anyone who has tried to stop smoking.

Nicotine effects the brain by serving as both a stimulant and sedative. As a person inhales cigarette smoke, the nicotine is sent directly to the brain within 10 seconds. There is also a release of dopamine into the part of the brain that is responsible for pleasure and motivation, the so-called “reward circuits.” The pleasurable effect is similar to the acute feeling of cocaine and heroin, which are also stimulants. However, these pleasant effects disappear in a matter of minutes. In order for smokers to maintain their level

**“ Let's face facts: Cigarette smoke is biologically active. Nicotine is a potent pharmacological agent. Every toxicologist, physiologist, medical doctor and most chemists know that. It's not a secret. ”**

**– From a 1982 Memo by  
Philip Morris researcher Thomas Osdene**

*continued page 2*

# Smoking & Sex

- ◆ According to a recent survey, smokers have lower sex drives and less frequent sex, and enjoy sex less than nonsmokers.
- ◆ Nonsmokers reported having sex about 12 times a month and rated it 9 on a scale of 10, while smokers reported having sex only 6 times a month with a satisfaction level of only 5 on a scale of 10.
- ◆ Smokers also have poorer sperm quality, more fertility problems, and a substantially higher incidence of impotence.
- ◆ Apparently it's not the cigarettes that are sexy; it's the imagery we've associated them with all these years.

## Nicotine Lollipops Part of the Bigger Tobacco Industry Scheme

Formerly secret tobacco industry documents show that one major cigarette maker once considered making tobacco-based lollipops and other candies with nicotine, while at the same time the tobacco industry claimed it was trying to make smoking unattractive to kids.

This recently found memo is one of the strongest pieces of evidence supporting the Food and Drug Administration's position that the tobacco companies intended to use nicotine as an addictive substance targeted toward children.

3,000 new smokers take up the habit every day. 90% of new smokers start before the age

of 19. Thus, tobacco advertising and marketing is targeted toward creating new youth smokers. One tobacco company recently took out ads in comic books showing an adolescent choking on a cigarette, his face green, with the slogan "Tobacco is whacko. . . if you're a teen." Yet, research shows that one of the reasons teens start to smoke is to prove their maturity and adulthood.

Anti-tobacco activists point to the ads as one way the tobacco industry tries to directly appeal to youth by tempting them to try cigarettes. Masquerading as prevention messages, the ads contain no health warning and merely dare teens to prove they are old enough to smoke.

## Death . . . *continued from page 1*

of gratification and avoid withdrawal, they must receive regular doses of nicotine throughout the day. After a few hours of smoking one cigarette, the strong effects of the nicotine begin to dissipate. For this reason, many smokers have claimed that their "best" cigarette is their first cigarette of the day. As time progresses, a person's body develops an acute tolerance, thus he or she must smoke more to get the same desirable effects.

Further adding difficulty is how interwoven the behavior is with our popular culture. Cigarettes have been used so frequently in entertainment that a recovering smoker would be challenged to turn on the television at any time of day and not be exposed to at least one character taunting him or her with the visual trigger of on screen smoking – a reminder of the power of addiction. ■

# SMOKERS DRINK & Drinkers Smoke

Drive past public buildings in any community in America on nearly every night of the week and you'll see them just outside the door – large groups of smokers. Outside: two steps (light and puff) to the next fix. Inside: twelve steps to recovery, maintained a day at a time.

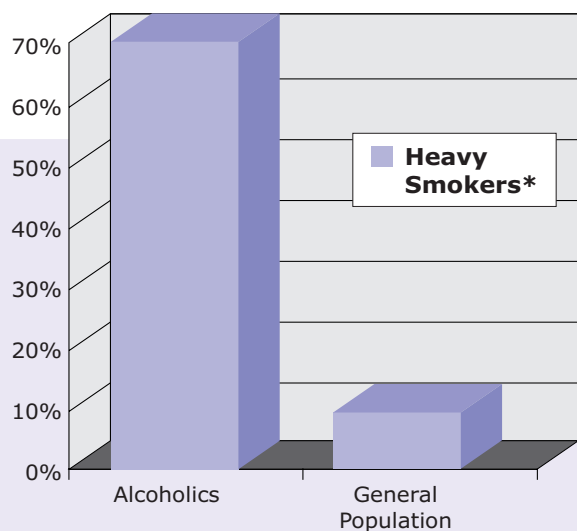
Extensive research supports this popular observation that "smokers drink and drinkers smoke." Moreover, the heaviest alcohol consumers are also the heaviest consumers of tobacco. Concurrent use of these drugs poses a significant public health threat. A survey of persons treated for alcoholism and other drug addictions revealed that 222 of 845 subjects had died over a 12-year period; one-third of these deaths were attributed to alcohol-related causes, and one-half were related to smoking.

Between 80 and 95 percent of alcoholics smoke cigarettes, a rate that is three times higher than among the population as a whole. Approximately 70 percent of alcoholics are *heavy* smokers (i.e., smoke more than one pack of cigarettes per day), compared with 10 percent of the general population. Drinking influences smoking

more than smoking influences drinking. Nevertheless, smokers are 1.32 times more likely to consume alcohol than are nonsmokers.

Most adult users of alcohol or tobacco first tried these drugs during their early teens. Among smoking alcoholics, the initiation of regular cigarette smoking typically precedes the onset of alcoholism by many years, although data are inconsistent. Adolescents who begin smoking are 3 times more likely to begin using alcohol, and smokers are 10 times more likely to develop alcoholism than are nonsmokers.

Enoch Gordis, M.D., Director of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) points out that "alcohol and tobacco are frequently used together, may share certain brain pathways underlying dependence, and because of their numerous social and health-related consequences, are a continuing source of national public policy debate." Dr. Gordis is hopeful that "as basic science learns more about how alcohol and nicotine act singly and together within the brain, new treatments for alcohol and tobacco dependence will follow." In the meantime, don't expect the crowd of smokers outside your local AA meeting to start dwindling anytime soon. ■



\*"Heavy Smokers" refers to people who smoke more than one pack of cigarettes per day

## Drinking Influences Smoking more than Smoking Influences Drinking

- **Alcoholics are three times more likely to smoke** than the general population.
- **Smokers are 1.32 times more likely to consume alcohol** than are nonsmokers.

Quitting isn't easy, but it can be done. The first step in the process is just making the decision. It helps if the smoker has a positive set of reasons for quitting and commits to a target date.

It's also important that the smoker be realistic about the process, knowing that:

- ◆ Quitting is difficult, but possible.
- ◆ Withdrawal symptoms will last 1 to 2 weeks, but are temporary.
- ◆ Relapses are common during the first week.
- ◆ Relapses also occur in the first 3 months, especially if a stressful situation presents itself.

Not many smokers quit on their first try. Successful ex-smokers go through the process several times before succeeding.

It helps to have support either from a smoking cessation program or family and friends.

**Cold Turkey** is the hardest way to quit. Some people are able to cut down day-to-day until they reach their target date. But others need additional help in dealing with the physical and psychological results of smoking cessation. They can use treatments that have chemical or medical bases.

**Zyban:** The FDA approved Zyban, the anti-smoking pill, in 1997. Bupropion hydrochloride was originally approved as an anti-depressant (brand name: Wellbutrin), but the drug seems to affect chemicals in the brain dealing with nicotine addiction. Zyban requires a prescription and has several side effects including dry mouth, sleeping difficulty, shakiness, and skin rash. It is not recommended for people with seizure conditions, those who are taking medicines with bupropion hydrochloride, or pregnant or lactating women.

A number of treatments commonly used are nicotine replacements.

**Nicotine Transdermal System:** The nicotine patch has been available over-the-counter since 1996 under the brand names Nicoderm, Nicotrol, Habitrol, and Prostep. This patch is applied daily to a clean, dry, hairless part of the body for a specified amount of time. The patch can cause mild itching, burning, or tingling. It is not recommended for people with skin problems or allergies to adhesive tape.

**Nicotine Chewing Gum:** Nicorette gum has also been available over-the-counter since 1996.

- ◆ Cold Turkey
- ◆ Zyban/Wellbutrin
- ◆ Nicotine Transdermal System
- ◆ Nicorette Gum
- ◆ Nicotine Nasal Spray
- ◆ Nicotine Inhaler
- ◆ Other (hypnosis, acupuncture)

Smokers follow a special routine, chewing the gum slowly until a slight tingling or peppery taste occurs. They then must place the gum between their cheek and gum until the tingling or taste is gone. The cycle takes about 30 minutes. The average smoker chews 9-12 pieces a day to control the urge to smoke. The maximum number of pieces that can be chewed daily is 20-30. Nicorette gum is not recommended for those with dentures or TMJ (temporomandibular joint disease).

**Nicotine Nasal Spray:** This method was approved in 1996 and is accessible by prescription only. Smokers inhale the nicotine from a pump bottle into their nose. The spray is absorbed through the nasal lining and into the bloodstream. This method cannot be used for more than 6 months. The spray can cause nasal and sinus irritation and should not be used by those with nasal or sinus conditions, asthma, or allergies.

**Nicotine Inhaler:** This system has been available since 1997. The smoker inhales the nicotine through the mouth using a mouthpiece attached to a cartridge. The nicotine goes from the mouth to the throat, where it is absorbed through the mucous membranes. The inhaler can cause cough or throat irritation and is not recommended for people with asthma or similar diseases.

**Other Methods:** Some smokers try "natural" methods such as acupuncture or hypnosis.

With so many ways to quit or attempt to quit smoking, there are limitless possibilities for both dramatic and humorous exploration in entertainment production. As with the act of quitting itself, the first step is making the decision. The rest is up to the creator. ■

# Don't Be Fooled by Trendy Cigarettes

The latest hot trend – herbal cigarettes, also known as bidis and Kreyteks – is luring a new generation of teenagers into smoking.

Many young people mistakenly believe that these substitutes are safe and free of the hazards connected with traditional cigarette smoking. The truth is that all herbal cigarettes contain tobacco, usually low grade, and are as harmful, if not more so, than regular cigarettes.

Bidis (pronounced "beedies") are unfiltered cigarettes imported from India. They are slim, hand-rolled, filled with shredded tobacco, which is wrapped in tendu leaves (a native Indian plant), and tied with string. They don't burn easily, constantly needing to be re-lit, and require smokers to draw on them more frequently and inhale more deeply. Shaped to look like marijuana joints, the cigarettes have a special allure for young adults.

Bidis are available in cone shaped packages (labeled *natural*) or one of a variety of colorful boxes. In addition, the taste of bidis – special candy store flavors – is appealing to teenagers.

Sold in tobacco stores and head shops, bidis are less expensive than regular brands, costing about \$1.50 to \$3.50/pack.

Although governed by the same laws as cigarettes, bidis' packaging often appears without the Surgeon General's health warning or tax stamp. Bidis cannot be legally sold to anyone under 18; however, a San Francisco study found that they are sold to minors without IDs twice as often as traditional cigarettes. To make matters worse, a carton of bidis can be bought on the Internet for \$40 without proof of age.

Current scientific research has shown that bidis release three to five times more tar, nicotine, and carbon monoxide than traditional cigarettes even though they have less tobacco. An individual who smokes bidis is at risk for developing lung and oral cancers

just as he or she would be with other tobacco products.

Child labor is the backbone of the bidis industry even though the Indian Supreme Court has forbidden child labor in its tobacco industry. Some 325,000 Indian children roll bidis daily, some as young as 10 years old. Human Rights Watch has determined that children roll as many as 1,500 to 2,000 bidis daily, six and a half days a week. For their labors, they earn about 4 rupees a day (approximately 10 cents).

Although it is illegal for a minor to smoke cigarettes in California, a young person can still purchase bidis as singles for a quarter or 20-packs for \$2.00. In the Washington, DC area, bidis are sold for about \$3.50.

**Kreyteks**, which are made in Indonesia, are made using a mixture of clove buds and tobacco. This brand sells approximately 300,000 cartons of bidis each year.

**Herbal cigarettes**, imported from China, also contain tobacco. These cigarettes have a high level of tar and nicotine (between 11 and 15 mgs. of tar; 1.5 mgs. of nicotine). Some herbal cigarettes do not have nicotine, but they still have high tar levels and other cigarette by-products.

For many years, bidis were very popular in India and were known as the "poor man's cigarette." Now they are a choice among young American adults. Many young smokers are substituting tobacco flavored bidis for cigarettes because of the taste, the cost, and the availability.

Actors are increasingly using these cigarette substitutes for on-screen smoking, thinking them to be non-addictive and harmless. The reality is that they are merely trading one potentially lethal prop for another. Ultimately, when the smoke clears, the mixture of role playing actors, herbals, and bidis adds up to just another occupational class-action suit waiting to happen. ■

# Tobacco on the Web

[www.cdc.gov/tobacco](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Tobacco Information and Prevention Source (TIPS) includes Surgeon General reports, research and data guides to assist people who want to quit smoking. Educational materials and publications are also provided.

[www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) site provides information on the results of NIDA-sponsored science-based research, on nicotine abuse and addiction prevention, as well as treatment and policy.

[www.jointogether.org](http://www.jointogether.org)

Join Together is a national resource for communities fighting substance abuse and gun violence.

[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

This American Cancer Society site provides information on types of cancer, prevention, tobacco control, research programs, and statistics and media resources.

[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

The American Heart Association provides information on nicotine's effect on health, stroke, scientific and professional research and publications.

[www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org)

The American Lung Association is a leader in tobacco education. The site provides information on quitting smoking, as well as how smoking affects teens, women, and special populations.

[www.cancernet.nci.nih.gov](http://www.cancernet.nci.nih.gov)

The National Cancer Institute coordinates the National Cancer Program, conducting and supporting research, training, and health information dissemination. The site provides information on the cause, diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of cancer.

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