

Cigarette Ingredients and Additives

What is in a cigarette?

While a single cigarette contains up to 599 additives, of which many may seem to be harmless, it is the burning of these chemicals that produce toxic and carcinogenic compounds, more than 4000 of them. The negative health effects of smoking can be devastating, just look at the compounds being inhaled with each puff.

Here is a list of the main cigarette ingredients that are most noxious:

Nicotine: Nicotine is the main addictive ingredient in tobacco. It activates the synthesis of a chemical called dopamine in the brain. The effects of nicotine on the body are biphasic, in that it can both stimulate and relax you.

Acetone: This is used as a solvent to remove nail varnish.

Ammonia: This boosts the impact of nicotine.

Tar: Every time you smoke a cigarette, tar is deposited into the lungs. Heavy smokers, 20 plus cigarettes a day, can accumulate more than a pound of tar in their lungs each year.

Benzene: Benzene is used as a solvent in fuel and dyes. It also is carcinogenic.

Cadmium: Cadmium is used to make batteries; it is damaging to the kidneys and increases the risk of developing lung cancer.



American Cancer Society: www.cancer.org

What is in Cigarette Smoke?

There are 43 known carcinogens contained in mainstream cigarette smoke.

Hydrogen cyanide: This is a colorless-to-blue vapor which can cause death within minutes if breathed in large concentrations. It is used as a pesticide and fumigant to kill rats. Breathing in small amounts of it can cause headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea and vomiting.

Carbon Monoxide (CO): Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas which when inhaled reduces the body's ability to carry oxygen. Cigarette smoke can contain high levels of this gas. Breathing low levels of CO can cause fatigue while increasingly higher concentrations can lead to headache, nausea, confusion, disorientation and eventually death.

Nitrogen oxides: Nitrogen oxides also contribute to air pollution and acid rain.

Ammonia: Ammonia is used in cigarettes to boost the impact of nicotine. It can be irritating to the skin, eyes, nose, throat and lungs.

