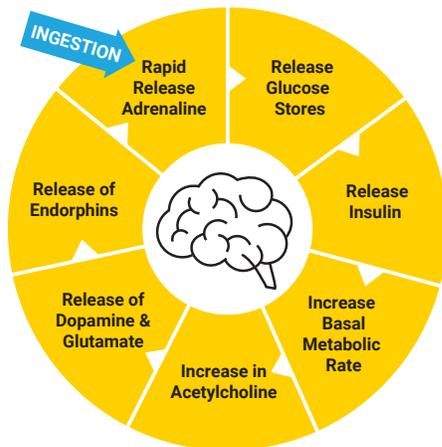


Nicotine & Tobacco

Definitions & Discussion Questions



Effects of Nicotine on the Brain



Nicotine: A chemical found in tobacco plants. It is a central nervous system stimulant that tricks the body into thinking it is exercising. It stimulates adrenaline, increases heart rate, blood pressure, and respiration within 8-10 seconds after ingestion. At the same time, it activates additional neurotransmitters and hormones, including dopamine, glutamate and endorphins.

Initially, nicotine temporarily increases thinking, memory, and attention, but these benefits deteriorate over time, causing cognitive decline in the long term. Nicotine negatively alters and arrests adolescent brain development in unique ways and primes the brain, enhancing the effects of other drugs.

Critical Thinking Section

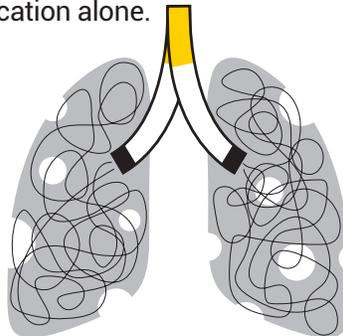
Students:

- Do you know someone who smokes cigarettes or other tobacco products? Do you think it looks cool? Why or why not?
- Does your family have a rule about nicotine and tobacco? Do you agree with it? Why?
- Why do people start smoking when they know tobacco causes so many deaths?
- What would you do if someone asked you to smoke in the bathroom at school?
- What are your consequences at home and school if you smoke at home or on campus?
- Do you know anyone who smokes? What is it like being around them?

Quitting is Hard

Only 6% of smokers are able to quit in any given year. It takes about 10 years of trying to quit smoking before a smoker is able to completely stop. The good news is that much of the smoking-induced lung damage repairs over time. However, the healing process could take up to seven years or more.

There are many nicotine-cessation tools such as prescription medication, patches, gums and inhalers. Medication and counseling are more effective than medication alone.



Staff & Family:

- What is the appropriate consequence if your child engages in smoking?
- What should you do if your child or student comes to you and reports that they are addicted to nicotine?
- Do you model healthy lung care? If not, what steps can you take to stop smoking?
- What coping skills could you teach youth to help prevent nicotine or tobacco use?
- Do your children think it is cool to smoke? Why?
- What would your child do if they knew someone who was smoking? Would they report it to you? Why or why not?