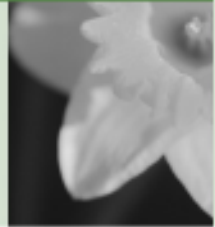


Dangers of cigar smoking



- Compared to a cigarette, a large cigar gives off up to 20 times the ammonia, 5-10 times more cancer-causing cadmium, and up to 90 times more cancer-causing nitrosamines.
- Cigars can give off 22 times more carbon monoxide (which can cause heart attacks) than cigarettes.
- A study measured more carbon monoxide at two cigar social events than on a busy California freeway.
- Cigar smoke from a single cigar can take five hours to go away.
- The smoke of a big cigar can yield 12 times as much nicotine as a cigarette.

Cigar smoking is gaining in popularity in New Zealand. Cigar smoke, like tobacco smoke, causes lung cancer, heart disease and lung damage.

None of this is obvious in the glamorous magazines and newspaper pictures of famous people smoking cigars. This promotional material ignores the high health risks of smoking cigars.

People who smoke cigars are likely to become addicted to nicotine, even if they don't inhale. The nicotine in a cigar enters the bloodstream directly through the lining of the mouth. The smoke is usually too irritating to inhale. Big cigars can contain as much nicotine as a whole packet of cigarettes.

Cigar smoke is packed with toxins. Within seconds of lighting up, smoke fills the smoker's mouth and throat, unleashing over 4000 chemical compounds, at least 9 of which cause cancer.

Cigars are at least as dangerous as cigarettes and cause similar diseases:

- cigar smokers face double the risk of dying from all forms of cancer combined and from various heart problems
- smoking 1 or 2 cigars a day, even if not inhaled, doubles a person's risk for many cancers
- cigar smokers are as likely as cigarette smokers and 9 times more likely than non-smokers to develop lung cancer
- cigar smoking may cause cancer of the pancreas.

Cigars make more smoke than cigarettes, and they can contain many times more tobacco. Even a small cigar (cigarillo) contains about twice as much tobacco as a cigarette. The smoke of one cigar is more dangerous to non-smokers than the smoke of one cigarette. Second-hand smoke from cigars includes toxins such as carbon monoxide, nicotine, hydrogen cyanide, ammonia and volatile aldehydes.

Under New Zealand regulations boxed cigars, like packet cigarettes, must show health warning labels, but individual cigars do not need warnings.

Reviewed at September 2004