

The Hazards of Waterpipe Smoking

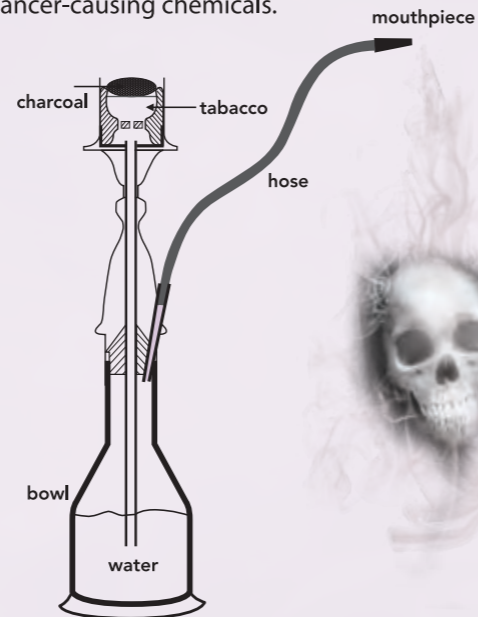


What is waterpipe smoking?

Waterpipe is a tobacco-smoking device that originated from India and the Middle East. Its use is increasing in some parts of the world.

Waterpipe tobacco comes in different flavours. The tobacco is heated to give off smoke which passes through a water bowl and is inhaled by the smoker through the hose of the waterpipe. This smoke not only contains the combustion products of tobacco, but also that of charcoal or other heating substances.

Contrary to the belief of many waterpipe smokers, waterpipe smoking is not safer than smoking cigarettes. Even after the smoke has passed through water, it contains numerous toxicants including tar, carbon monoxide, heavy metals and cancer-causing chemicals.



Health effects of waterpipe smoking

Due to the mode of smoking - including frequency of puffing, depth of inhalation and length of the smoking session - **waterpipe smokers may inhale more toxins than they would when smoking cigarettes.** A typical 1-hour waterpipe smoking session exposes the user to 100-200 times the volume of smoke inhaled from a single cigarette! It also results in a carbon monoxide level at least four to five times higher than the amount produced by one cigarette.

Waterpipe smokers are at risk for the same kind of diseases as are caused by cigarette smoking, including **oral cancer, lung cancer, stomach cancer, cancer of the oesophagus, reduced lung function, heart disease and decreased fertility.**



Waterpipe smoking delivers the addictive drug nicotine and causes **dependence.**

Secondhand smoke from waterpipes poses a serious health hazard to non-smokers.

Charcoals or embers are commonly used to heat tobacco during waterpipe smoking. The combustion of them increases the health risks by producing high levels of **carbon monoxide, heavy metals and hydrocarbons.**

Sharing a waterpipe mouthpiece also poses a serious risk of transmission of **communicable diseases**, including tuberculosis and hepatitis.

Prohibition of smoking in no smoking area

According to the Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance, no person shall smoke or carry a lighted cigarette, cigar or pipe in statutory no smoking areas. Offenders will be subject to a fixed penalty of HK\$1,500. Waterpipe is a type of pipe and its use is prohibited in all statutory no smoking areas.

Smoking Cessation Services

At present, there are a number of smoking cessation clinics run by the Department of Health (DH), the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, the Pok Oi Hospital, the Hospital Authority and various organisations. Some family doctors and private hospitals also provide smoking cessation services.

For enquiry, please call DH's Integrated Smoking Cessation hotline

1833 183

DH also operates the Interactive Online Cessation Centre to help smokers quit smoking.

www.tco.gov.hk/iocc

For more information, please visit Tobacco Control Office's Website

www.tco.gov.hk

Enquiry and Complaint Hotline

2961 8823

Smoking Cessation Hotline

1833 183

Department of Health
Integrated Smoking Cessation Hotline

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