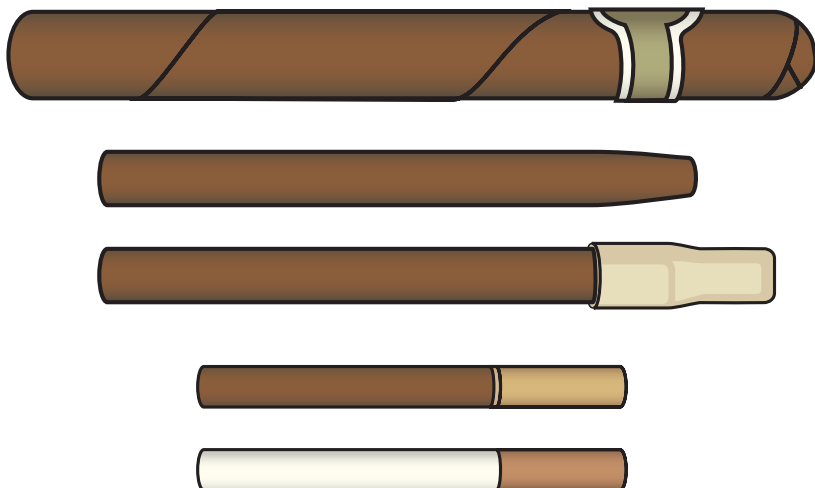




Cigars

What are cigars?

Cigars are tobacco rolls, wrapped in leaf tobacco or material that contains tobacco. Although many people think cigars are less harmful than cigarettes, in truth, smoking one large cigar can be the same as smoking an entire pack of cigarettes! Cigars are different from cigarettes in several ways. Cigars do not generally have filters and come in many sizes. One large cigar may contain more than a half an ounce of tobacco and can take from 1 to 2 hours to smoke. *Small* or “*little cigars*” look a lot like



cigarettes, except for their brown color. Little cigars are the same size as cigarettes, may have filters, and are sold in packs of twenty. Cigarillos are slightly larger than little cigars. People tend to smoke cigarillos and inhale them like cigarettes. Some companies add strawberry, chocolate, and other sweet flavors to cigars to appeal to younger smokers. In a recent survey, more than 40% of cigar smokers used flavored cigars.

Who is smoking cigars?

Since 2009, cigarette smoking has been declining, however approximately 5.4% of all U.S. adults smoke cigars. In addition, nearly 11% of high school students and 4% of middle school students report that they smoke cigars. Smoking little cigars is popular with high school boys because they are less expensive than cigarettes. Millions of people (13.3 million) over the age of 12 are current cigar users.

Is cigar smoking dangerous?

Cigars are not considered “safe” alternatives to cigarettes. Cigars contain the same toxic and cancer causing chemicals found in cigarettes. People who smoke cigars on a regular basis are at increased risk of many kinds of cancer including; cancer of the esophagus, pancreas, bladder, lip, tongue, mouth, and throat. Those people who inhale cigar smoke deep into their lungs may also have an increased risk heart disease and lung cancer. Daily cigar smoking causes other lung diseases such as COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), emphysema and chronic bronchitis. Cigar smoking has also been linked to gum disease, tooth loss and sexual impotence in men. Cigar smoking also has an effect on pregnant women and their babies. In addition, unborn babies and infants exposed to cigar smoke may be smaller in size and have lungs that do not develop normally.

What about secondhand cigar smoke?

Cigars contain more tobacco than cigarettes and often burn for a longer period of time, resulting in greater amounts of secondhand smoke (see ATS Patient Series on Second and Third Hand Smoke). This passive smoke includes smoke from the burning end of the cigar as well as the smoke that the smoker exhales. High concentrations of harmful chemicals such as carbon monoxide and ammonia are released into the environment from cigar smoke.

Cigars and Taxes

In most states, the taxes on cigars are less than the taxes on cigarettes. Because they are a cheaper alternative to cigarettes, smaller cigars seem more attractive to consumers, in particular younger smokers. Also, cigars sales are regulated differently than cigarettes. Some federal laws, which ban flavored cigarettes, block illegal Internet sales and restrict advertisements of cigarettes, do not apply to cigars.

For help with quitting:

- Talk to your health care provider to find out if you are eligible to use medications or nicotine replacement products to help you quit smoking.

Cigars (cont.)

- Find a local smoking cessation program by visiting <http://www.quitnet.com/library/programs/>.
- Call 1-800-QUITNOW (1-800-784-8669) for telephone counseling and information about quitting in your state.
- Don't give up! Keep trying.

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Reviewer: Suzanne Lareau RN, MS

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