Australian Government

GIVE UP FOR GOOD

Shisha and quitting FAQs

Shisha smoking reduces quality of life and increases risk of disease - including heart disease, cancer and stroke - and also harms the health of loved ones.

A shisha is a device used for smoking shisha tobacco. When you inhale through its mouthpiece, smoke passes through water before entering your mouth and lungs.

The nicotine in shisha tobacco is highly addictive. This is why quitting can be hard and may take several attempts.

No matter how long you've been smoking shisha, it's never too late to quit. There are lots of free support services and tools to help you do it.

Quitting at any age will improve your health and quality of life, and protect the health of people around you.

This document answers a range of common questions about why you should stop smoking shisha and how it will improve your health. Understanding the facts is the first step to giving up smoking shisha for good.

At least **80 toxic chemicals** have been found in shisha smoke

How does smoking shisha damage your body?

Some people think that the water in shisha filters out the dangerous chemicals from tobacco smoke, but this is not true. At least 80 toxic chemicals have been found in shisha smoke. The fruity or sweet flavourings hide the taste of these chemicals and do not make shisha a healthy choice.

The toxic chemicals found in shisha smoke can damage your body in many ways, for example:

Nicotine narrows your veins and arteries. This can damage your heart by forcing it to work harder to pump your blood around your body. It can also reduce the blood flow in your feet and hands.

Carbon monoxide deprives your heart of the oxygen it needs to pump blood around your body. Over time, your airways swell up and let less air into your lungs.

Tar is a sticky substance that coats the inside of your lungs.

Acrolein causes lung disease.

Formaldehyde causes cancer.

Smoking shisha can lead to serious short and long-term health issues.

Short-term health risks include:

- reduced lung capacity, impacting fitness
- increased heart rate and blood pressure
- carbon monoxide poisoning.

Long-term health risks include:

- heart disease
- stroke
- lung, mouth and stomach cancer
- reduced lung function
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), including emphysema and chronic bronchitis.

Sharing shishas can also increase the risk of spreading infections and diseases.

Is smoking shisha healthier than smoking cigarettes?

No. There is no safe level of smoking any tobacco product, including shisha.

Smoking shisha is just as dangerous as smoking cigarettes, if not more. People who smoke shisha inhale more toxic chemicals than people who smoke cigarettes.

In a 5-minute shisha session, you can inhale a similar amount of nicotine as you would from smoking one cigarette. However, a typical shisha session often lasts 45 minutes to an hour, which can lead to a much higher level of exposure to toxic chemicals.

How can smoking shisha harm others around me?

Second hand shisha smoke is dangerous to the people around you, especially children. It can put your loved ones at risk of heart disease, lung cancer and other diseases. Second hand smoke can also worsen conditions like asthma and bronchitis.

What happens to your body if you quit smoking shisha?

Quitting shisha smoking can improve your health and wellbeing, and the health of those around you.

By quitting, you can:

- lower your risk of serious diseases like cancer and heart disease
- improve your lung function and fitness
- protect your loved ones from second hand smoke.

How can I quit smoking shisha?

There are lots of ways to quit smoking shisha. Often, a combination of methods is most successful.

- Talk to your doctor, pharmacist or other health professional about the different options available to you.
- Call the Quitline on 13 7848 for confidential advice and support from professional counsellors. If you need language support, Quitline will connect you with an interpreter through Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National).
- Visit Quit.org.au for tips and strategies to help you quit and information on what to expect during the quitting process.
- Download My QuitBuddy, a free smartphone app designed to help you every step of the way.

What if I tried to quit in the past, but it didn't work?

Quitting might take several attempts, and you can learn something every time you try. Every quit attempt will bring you one step closer to quitting for good.

It's always worth trying again, and you can try a different approach. Talking to a health professional can help you make a quit plan and understand the options available that could work for you.

Quitting can be hard, but many people have quit and you can too.

For help to quit shisha smoking, talk to a health professional, visit **Quit.org.au**, call Quitline on **13 7848**, or download the **My QuitBuddy** app.