



THE HOOKAH



A hookah (also called shisha) is equivalent to smoking 40 cigarettes.

It's helps lift your spirits.

Shisha gives me a headache.

With friends, a beer in your hand and a pipe in your mouth.

Useful and objective information about shisha.



ORIGINS & USE

Shisha is associated with oriental traditions. It is also known as water pipe, narghilé, hookah. **Its origins are mysterious** and are sometimes controversial. It plays an important role in some cultures and symbolizes dialogue. Shisha is generally consumed in groups and represents a moment of conviviality and relaxation for smokers.

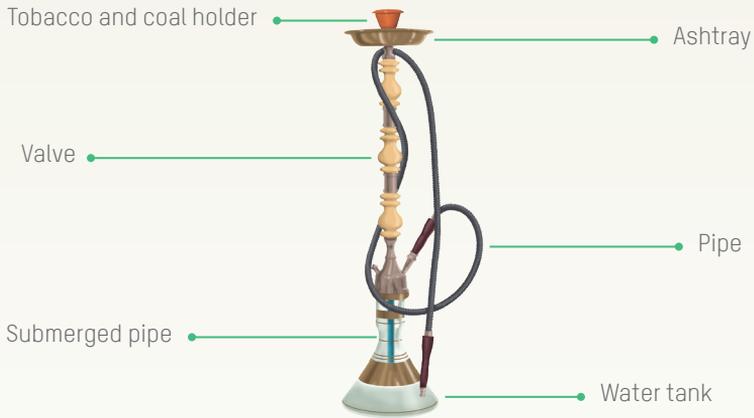
Shisha has spread in recent years in the West. Many shisha bars and restaurants have opened all over Europe.

However, many consumers seem **uninformed** about the health effects of shisha. Some testimonies collected by the Fonds des Affections Respiratoires (FARES) highlight a large number of false beliefs.

This brochure was created to provide useful and objective information on the hookah.



WHAT IS SHISHA?



Shisha is a water pipe used to smoke tobamel heated with charcoal. At the top of the pipe, the tobamel is placed in the tobacco holder below the lit embers of coal. The smoker sucks into the pipe, which causes the smoke to flow down the immersed pipe. The smoke then rises to the surface of the water and then into the pipe.

Tobamel is the most common type of tobacco used in a shisha. It is composed of about 30% tobacco and 70% molasses. Molasses is a mixture of honey and fruit to which an artificial flavor has been added or not.

Steam stones (or **shisha stones** also known as **steam stones**) are an **alternative to tobamel**. They are porous stones covered with glycerol and an artificial flavor. Heated with coal, they produce steam like the electronic cigarette. They have the advantage of not containing nicotine.

The **coal** is used for the **combustion** (burning) of the tobamel. There are traditional coal and quick-ignition coal. The latter is coated with a substance that accelerates combustion; it produces a greater quantity of **toxic substances**.

Electric coal is an alternative to conventional coal. It is an electric resistance that heats the tobamel or steam stones avoiding combustion. In this case there is no production of carbon monoxide (CO) or tar.



SHISHA UNDER SCRUTINY

Tar is a dark, oily substance produced by burning tobacco and any natural fuel (e.g. coal) heated to high temperatures. The production of tar by a single shisha is up to 100 times greater than that of a single cigarette.

↳ **Most of the tar produced by burning tobacco and coal passes through water, which retains just under half of it. They are thus breathed in by the smoker, causing irritation, coughing and the ingestion of many toxic or carcinogenic chemicals.**

Nicotine is a molecule present in tobacco. When it is consumed via a conventional or electronic cigarette, it acts on the brain and provides, in a few seconds only, a feeling of well-being that can lead to addiction. Nicotine's speed of action is slower with shisha compared with a conventional cigarette, while the amount of nicotine inhaled is twice as much.

↳ **The risk of nicotine addiction during frequent shisha consumption is not nil, however, especially since it is often accompanied by important social rituals that can reinforce the desire to repeat the experience.**

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a gas produced during combustion. It is a colourless and odourless but highly toxic gas. When breathed in, CO binds itself to red blood cells instead of oxygen molecules (O₂). The body's organs and muscles are thus less well supplied with oxygen. To try to compensate for the lack of O₂, the bone marrow increases the production of red blood cells, which thickens the blood.

↳ **The amount of CO inhaled in a single session of shisha is more or less equivalent to the amount inhaled when smoking two packs of cigarettes.**



THE EFFECTS ON HEALTH

The regular consumption of shisha causes health risks for the smoker and those around her/him. The effects on the smoker's health are notably linked to chronic irritation of the respiratory tract and exposure to the components of tobamel and coal smoke (CO, tar, additives, nicotine), which may be linked to:

- › Cancers
- › Cardiovascular diseases: coronary artery disease, thrombosis, stroke, etc.
- › chronic respiratory diseases: emphysema, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease).

Smoking also has an impact on sex life, fertility, smell, taste, mood, oral hygiene...

Passive smoking is the breathing of smoke by people around a smoker. During a shisha session, the smoke released by the consumer spreads into the air and is breathed in by those around her/him. The non-smoker in the room breathes in both the smoke coming directly from the shisha and the smoke coming from the smoker.

↳ **By being present at a shisha session, the “passive smokers” expose themselves to health risks that are similar to those of the consumer.**



Shisha can also be a relapse factor for an ex-cigarette smoker.



A FEW TIPS

Here are a few tips to reduce health risks when using shisha:

TIPS

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

- › Use only water in the tank.
- › Distribute the charcoal evenly so as not to carbonize the tobacco.
- › Do not pack the shisha tobacco too tightly inside the tobacco holder.
- › Inhale the smoke shallowly and at a low frequency

CHARCOAL & TOBAMEL

- › Favour steam stones rather than tobamel in order to limit the ingestion of toxic products.
- › Favour heat sources without combustion, such as electric coal.
- › When using conventional charcoal, choose natural charcoal, rather than fast-burning charcoal.
- › Do not use charcoal for barbecues.
- › Use shisha tobacco whose composition is clearly stated.

ENVIRONMENT

- › Use chicha in well-ventilated places (with two sources of aeration to create a proper draft).

MAINTENANCE

- › Remember to change the flexible tube regularly.
- › Change the water in the tank as often as possible.

HYGIENE

- › Use a sterile and disposable plastic mouthpiece for each shisha smoker.



To reduce health risks, consume outdoors, use steam stones heated with electric coal, and use only water in your chicha. These few tips greatly limit the inhalation of toxic products, tar and carbon monoxide.



WHAT DOES THE LAW SAY?

As of July 1, 2011, it is prohibited to smoke tobacco, tobacco products or similar products in all enclosed places accessible to the public without exception. This is also the case for shisha when tobamel is used.

However, it is still allowed:

- › to smoke on terraces provided that at least one of the sides (or walls) is completely open. It is not sufficient enough to only open the windows of a closed room;
- › Smoking in a smoking room, if it meets the installation conditions recommended by legislation.

In all cases, the law stipulates:

- › to place no-smoking signs at the entrance and inside the establishment so that everyone can see them;
- › remove any material that suggests smoking is permitted (e.g., ashtrays);
- › to respect and enforce the ban on smoking any tobacco product or similar product (cigarette, shisha tobacco, electronic cigarette, etc.) in a public place;
- › to preserve the public place from tobacco smoke.

In addition, shisha is subject to the same laws as those related to tobacco products: sale prohibited to children under 18 years of age, obligation to indicate health risks on the package, etc.



According to the World Health Organization: “the hookah is not only a health risk but also a gateway to smoking for a number of young people” (*World Health Organization report on the global tobacco epidemic, 2008, the power package*).



WHO TO INQUIRE?

- › To your **doctor** or another health care professional
- › To a **tobaccologist**, i.e., a health professional specializing in the accompaniment and management of tobacco use – www.tabacologie.be
- › A **Stop Smoking Support Centre or Support Group - Centre d'Aide aux Fumeurs- CAF®** (multidisciplinary team)
– www.centresdaideauxfumeurs.be
- › **Tabacstop** (free call) 080011100 where a tobaccologist will answer your questions or even undertake free regular counselling if you wish to stop smoking – www.tabacstop.be

Tobacology consultations benefit from a partial refund from the mutual insurance company.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, HEAD ON OVER TO THE BLOG WWW.AIDEAUXFUMEURS.BE
OR OUR WEBSITE WWW.FARES.BE**

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