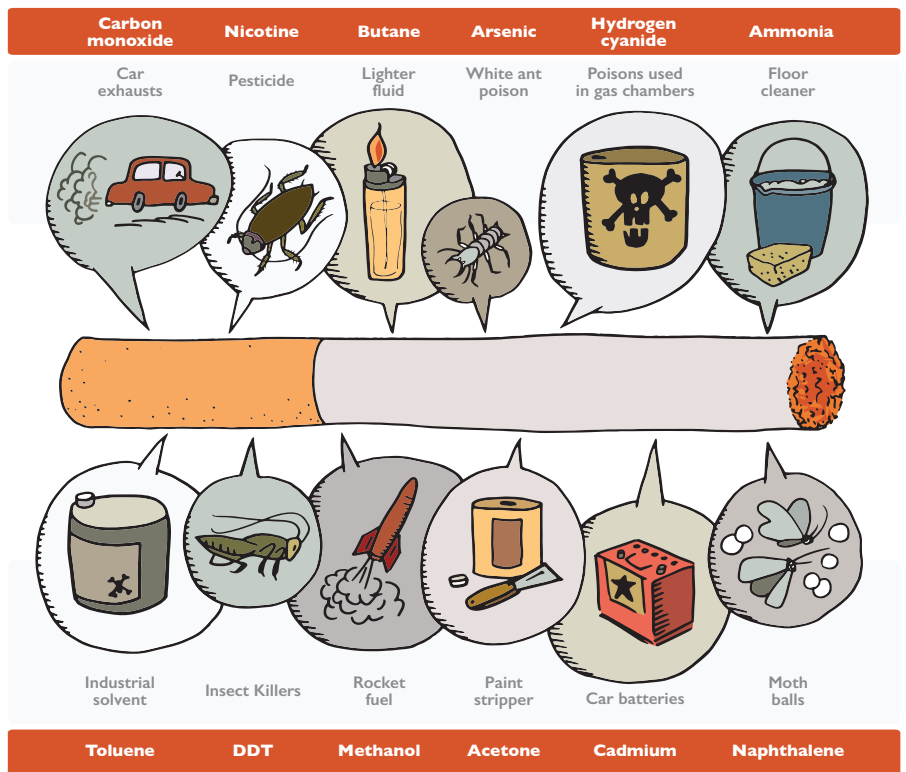


Fact Sheet What's in a Cigarette?

Cigarette smoke contains over 7000 chemicals and many of them cause cancer

Cigarettes are made from the dried leaves of the tobacco plant which are grown mainly in China, USA, Brazil and India. The leaves of the tobacco plant are dried by burning trees in ovens. Nearly 5 million hectares of forest are lost each year to produce cigarettes. When a person smokes they damage the environment as well as their health. After the leaves of the tobacco plant have been dried they are treated with many different chemicals.



When someone smokes a cigarette they breathe in:

Tar – a black, sticky substance that contains many poisonous chemicals such as ammonia (found in floor and window cleaner), toluene (found in industrial solvents) and acetone (found in paint stripper and nail polish remover). Tar is the main cause of throat and lung cancer. Tar also causes the yellowish brown stains on smokers' fingers, teeth and on the surfaces of rooms and furniture where people smoke heavily.

Nicotine – the drug in tobacco which is addictive. Nicotine is poisonous and has a number of effects on the body. These include increasing heart rate, raising blood pressure and making the small blood vessels under the skin shrink, which can cause wrinkles.

Carbon Monoxide – a poisonous gas that reduces the amount of oxygen a person's red blood cells can carry. This means less oxygen goes to organs of the body, blood gets thicker and the heart has to work harder.

Hydrogen Cyanide – the poison used in gas chambers during World War II which can kill a person very quickly. Even in low doses it has harmful health effects.

Metals – lead, nickel, arsenic (white ant poison) and cadmium (used in car batteries) are among the many metals found in tobacco smoke.

Insect Killers – such as DDT and Methoprene (found in flea powder) are used in growing tobacco. Other chemicals such as benzene (found in petrol) and naphthalene (found in mothballs) are added when cigarettes are being made.

Radioactive Compounds – are found in cigarettes and cause cancer.

The more cigarettes a person smokes, the greater risk of harm to their body. Nearly 6 million people across the world die every year from smoking. In Tasmania, around 502 people die each year from smoking. Even if you don't smoke you can still be harmed by being around other people's smoke.

