

Nicotine/Tobacco Fact Sheet

Overview/Description

Nicotine is key dependence associated substance in tobacco

- Is a central nervous system stimulant
- Is found in the natural plant *Nicotiana Tabacum* (tobacco leaves)
- Diffuses through skin, lungs & mucous membranes into and through bloodstream to brain. Will reach the brain within seven seconds of being inhaled
- Highly addictive as use results in an increase in number of Nicotinic receptors
- Tobacco contains thousands of other chemicals, including Carbon Monoxide and dozens of Carcinogens and Co-carcinogens

Short-Term Effects

- Produces feelings of relaxation, and pleasure
- Appetite suppression, stimulation, cognitive enhancement
- Increases blood pressure and heart beat to increase
- Lowers temperatures in hands and feet
- Dizziness, coughing, a dry irritated throat, gagging, headache, abdominal cramps, nausea and weakness upon initial use. Symptoms will subside with continued use

Long-Term Effects

- Lung and oral cancer as well as cancers of the throat, bladder, pancreas, stomach and kidney
- Heart disease, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, strokes and aneurysms
- Effects the nervous system, vascular system and hormones
- Decreased fertility, preterm delivery,
- Chronic bad breath, yellowing of the teeth, gum recession, tooth abrasion,
- Leukoplakia, gum and tooth disease, loss of bone in the jaw

Dependence Potential

- Regardless of the damaging effects of tobacco use, many individuals continue use to avoid the *withdrawal* symptoms
- High potential for *physical dependence* as nicotine results in increased nicotinic receptors and altered brain functioning
- Anticipation of nicotinic receptor activation and release of dopamine (pleasure) results in high potential for psychological dependence

Withdrawal

Withdrawal symptoms can include:

- Insomnia, restlessness, difficulty concentrating
- Anxiety, irritability, frustration, anger, depression
- Increased appetite, nausea, diarrhea, constipation
- Headache, decreased heart rate
- Symptoms last for a few weeks and then resolve. Cravings can be frequent and intense early, but become less intense and less frequent over time