

# WATERPIPE, SHISHA, HOOKAH SMOKING.

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**HISTORY**®

## What is waterpipe smoking?

Waterpipe smoking is a traditional method of smoking tobacco in the Middle East, India and Africa, originating in ancient Persia and India. Today, waterpipe smoking can be found around the globe, including Australia. Waterpipes can also be called 'shisha', 'hookah', 'arghile', 'narghile', 'goza' and 'hubble bubble'.

A traditional waterpipe is made up six parts: the head, bowl, body, water base, hose and mouthpiece. The smoker breathes in through the mouthpiece and tobacco smoke is drawn from the head, down the bowl and body, through the water base and into the mouth.

## Is it better for your health than smoking?

Many people use a waterpipe to smoke tobacco thinking that it is a safer, cleaner and less addictive option than traditional cigarettes.

**Using a waterpipe is not safe.**

The water in the waterpipe does not remove any of the toxins. Waterpipe smoke contains large amounts of nicotine, carbon monoxide, tar and other chemicals. Often fruit flavourings are combined with the tobacco to cover the taste of toxic substances.

It has been estimated that during a typical session, a waterpipe smoker inhales more than 100 times the volume of smoke produced by smoking a single cigarette. As a result you are likely to be exposed to greater levels of nicotine and other harmful substances.

## Health effects of waterpipe use

Just like cigarettes, there are significant negative health effects associated with using waterpipes or inhaling secondhand smoke from them. Waterpipe use immediately increases your heart rate, blood pressure and carbon monoxide levels. It can alter your voice and make it harder to exercise.

You are also at risk of:

- lung, stomach and throat cancer,
- respiratory illnesses such as emphysema and bronchitis,
- gum disease,
- carbon monoxide poisoning and
- reduced lung function.

If you use waterpipes while pregnant, your baby will also be at risk of low birth weight which can lead to other health problems.

Shared mouthpieces and hoses may pass on diseases including, hepatitis, herpes and lung infections.

## Secondhand smoke from waterpipes

Secondhand smoke from waterpipes also poses health risks for non-smokers. The smoke exhaled contains poisonous and cancer-causing chemicals, that can be inhaled deep into the lungs of people nearby.

**For support to give up waterpipe smoking, call the Quitline 13 7848 or visit [makesmokinghistory.org.au](http://makesmokinghistory.org.au) for ways to quit.**

