

Tobacco - nicotine

AKA: Cigarettes: Fags, tabs, baccy, smoke, ciggies, rollies. Vapes

Popularity: Adult smoking levels dropped from 24% in 2007 to 14.6 in 2022. e-cigarette use increased from around 700,000 in 2012 to 3.6 million in 2021 – from around 5% to 9% of adults.;

Method of Use: smoked, vaped, heated tobacco, shisha, chewed
Medical substitutes in inhalators, sprays, patches, gum, lozenges

Mechanism of action: nicotine acts as an agonist at nicotinic acetylcholine receptors. At lower doses nicotine acts as a stimulant and at very high doses reduces neuronal activity. Nicotine increases levels of dopamine (reward) and also triggers the brain's endogenous opioid system. It also increases adrenalin levels.

Duration: 15 mins

Effects:

+ve increased concentration, feeling alert, illusion of relaxation, reduction in nicotine craving
-ve increased heart rate, reduced lung function



Law: Legal for sale to 18+

Cost: £10+ varies with product

Source: Plant, dried, mixed with additives. Nicotine extracted for vapes etc. Sold via shops & online.

Category: Stimulant

Indicators: Paraphernalia for smoking and vaping. Smell of smoke or vape.
Smoking: yellow stains to fingers, teeth

Risks: Smoking: dependency, cancer, high blood pressure, reduced circulation, aging of skin, bronchial problems, heart problems.
Vaping: lung problems from the vapour, some cardiovascular risks linked to nicotine.