

THE HOOK IN HOOKAH

DID YOU KNOW?

Compared with non-smokers, hookah smokers are more likely to be white, male, and members of a fraternity or sorority².

In a 45 minute hookah smoking session, a person may inhale enough smoke to equal that of smoking 100 cigarettes or more².

In addition to the chemicals from the tobacco smoke, hookah smoke contains additional chemicals from heated charcoal².

Hookah bars are not required to sterilize mouthpieces after each individual use¹.

Some hookah bars claim their shisha is “low tar” or “low nicotine”, but lab tests reveal these claims are false¹.

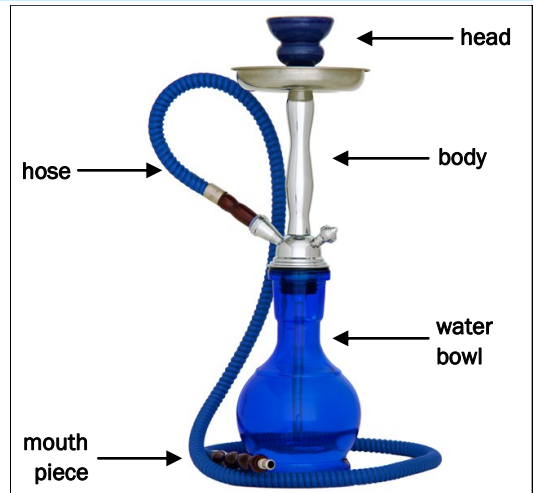
A hookah smoking session among college students, lasts on average 44 minutes⁶.

THE HISTORY OF HOOKAH

- Suspected origins in India during the late 16th century and quickly spread across Asia and the Middle East^{1, 8}
- Popularity declined in the U.S. following the wide availability of cigarettes at the start of the 20th century
- Smoking is often a social activity—in parts of Asia and Africa it is not uncommon for children to smoke with their parents⁸

How is Hookah Smoked?

Moist tobacco is placed in the head of the hookah (image to right)^{2, 8}. The head is then covered with aluminum foil with perforations and topped with a burning coal, the heat source. As the user inhales through the mouthpiece, air is pulled over the coal and into the body to heat the tobacco and create smoke. The smoke then travels down the body into water bowl, passing through the



Hookah is comprised of the head (where the tobacco is placed), body, and water bowl. Smoke is inhaled through the hose and mouthpiece.

water and inhaled via the hose and mouthpiece. Since the 1990's the moist tobacco comes in a variety of flavors, called shisha or Maassell¹. It contains 30% crude cut tobacco and is fermented with 70% honey, molasses, and fruit pulp.

HOOKAH MYTHS:

• Hookah smoke is filtered through water so it is less harmful than cigarettes³.

Although the water absorbs some of the nicotine, it still contains high levels of toxic compounds and cancer-causing chemicals⁸. In fact, because there are lower concentrations of nicotine in hookah smoke, users may inhale larger volumes of smoke, thus exposing themselves to greater numbers of chemicals.

• Occasional hookah users are at less risk than daily cigarette users⁶.

A 45-minute hookah smoking session creates enough smoke to equal that of smoking 100 cigarettes (this varies by frequency and volume of inhalations)⁸. The smoke volume is 100-200 times that of a single cigarette. There is also added risk due to the added chemicals resulting from burning the heat source (i.e., coal). Additionally, if shared mouthpieces are used when smoking, this contributes to the transmission of communicable diseases like tuberculosis, herpes, hepatitis, or mononucleosis as a result of sharing a mouthpiece^{1, 8}.

• Hookah smoking is covered under the Clean Indoor Air Act.

In some states, hookah bars do not fall under the Clean Indoor Air Act and can continue to operate under the premise that they are “retail tobacco establishment,” as long as the majority of the revenue is from the sale of tobacco products^{1, 2}.

• Hookah is regulated by the FDA.

There are no current regulations imposed by the FDA on hookah products, advertisements or retail. However, new restrictions have been proposed, which would allow the FDA to impose age restrictions and monitor hookah products⁹.



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THE HOOK TO HOOKAH:

WHY HOOKAH IS APPEALING TO YOUNG ADULTS?

Social Facilitation:

- Most users (73%) report smoking with friends or in social settings⁴.
- Smoking as part of a family or cultural activity is also common³.



Attractive Alternative:

- Hookah is seen as an alternative to cigarettes or drinking alcohol.
- It is appealing because it is socially acceptable and believed to be less harmful and addictive³.

Hookah flavors:

- Shisha comes in a variety of fruit, candy, or alcohol flavors—making it more enjoyable⁶.
- The flavors and cooling of smoke as it passes through

the water makes hookah smoke less harsh than cigarette smoke³.



Media:

- Has glamorized hookah use as a trendy, new, and “safer” activity, specifically targeting young people¹.

HOOKAH USE IN YOUNG ADULTS

Frequency:

- Cigarette use is decreasing but hookah is gaining popularity—mostly among college students².
- **1 in 10** college students used hookah in the last month (perceived use is closer to **3 in 4**)^{2, 7}.
- **1 in 4** college students have used hookah in their lifetime, but not in the last month.
- **Initiation is highest in the first 2 months of college** and on summer breaks⁵.

Dual Use:

- There is a strong link between hookah and tobacco use, marijuana



College students report smoking hookah to help relax, to get a “buzz” but to avoid affecting their sobriety³.

use, drinks per week, and binge drinking⁶.

- **Students who smoke tobacco or marijuana are more likely to use hookah** than those who do not⁸.
- Many initiate cigarette use

after starting with hookah.

- **Hookah users are 8 times more likely to experiment with cigarettes¹.**
- **1 in 4** hookah users report never having smoked cigarettes⁵.

Reasons for Use:

- Students, particularly females, report smoking hookah as an alternative to cigarettes or drinking³.
- Students say **hookah provides a “buzz” or “high”** without impacting sobriety—they can relax but stay “in control”³.
- College students use hookah because **it is cheaper and safer than using other drugs** or bar-hopping¹.

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