

Smoking

We all make poor decisions. Some we can shake off quickly and learn from, but others can stay with us for a very long time. Possibly the worst such choice one can make is to start smoking, because it is one that will change the course of your life and possibly even end it. There are numerous addictive chemicals in cigarettes that each serve to make it difficult and painful – physically, cognitively, and emotionally – to quit. Nicotine is the most well-known and creates the withdrawal symptoms, but other chemicals serve to replace the brain's natural ability to stave off depression and anxiety, so quitting smoking can, for some, result in literally unbearable unhappiness.

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But cigarettes contain so many poisons that scientists have still been unable to catalogue them all – they can only estimate that there are approximately 1,000. They damage your lungs and your circulation; they make it hard to run, hard to breathe, hard to socialise – because they stink – and even hard to find a spouse. Whether you succeed in quitting or not, cigarettes will make your life miserable. They're not clever, they're not cool, and they're absolutely not sexy. The only rational choice is never to start.

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What is the main addictive chemical in cigarettes?

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How many poisons do cigarettes contain?

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What problems can smoking cause?