



Georgia Department of Human Resources • Division of Public Health • Stuart T. Brown, M.D., Director  
2 Peachtree Street NW • Suite 15.470 • Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3142  
404-657-2700 • FAX: 404-657-2715

## The Truth about Cigars, Smokeless Tobacco and Menthol

### Great American Smokeout® Fact Sheet #4

#### Cigars

- A cigar is any roll of tobacco wrapped in leaf tobacco or in any substance containing tobacco.
- Most cigars have as much nicotine as several cigarettes.
- When cigar smokers inhale, smoke is absorbed as rapidly as with a cigarette. For those who do not inhale, it is absorbed more slowly through the lining of the mouth.
- Cigar smoking increases your risk of death from several cancers including cancer of the lung, oral cavity (lip, tongue, mouth, throat), esophagus and larynx. If you inhale, cigar smoking also appears to be linked to death from cancer of the pancreas and bladder.
- Cigar smoking increases the risk of heart disease and lung diseases such as emphysema and chronic bronchitis.
- Cigars give off greater amounts of secondhand smoke because they contain more tobacco (higher concentrations of nitrogen oxides, ammonia, carbon monoxide and tar) and they burn for much longer.

#### Smokeless Tobacco

- The use of smokeless tobacco is **NOT** a safe substitute for smoking cigarettes or cigars as these products can cause various cancers and non-cancerous oral conditions.
- Smokeless tobacco can lead to nicotine addiction.
- Conditions caused by smokeless tobacco, include:
  - Cancer of the mouth and pharynx
  - Leukoplakia (white sores in the mouth that can lead to cancer)
  - Gum recession or peeling back of the gums
  - Bone loss around the teeth
  - Abrasion of teeth
  - Bad breath
- Smokeless tobacco may play a role in cardiovascular disease and high blood pressure. Smokeless tobacco delivers a high dose of nicotine. An average dose for snuff is 3.6 mg for chewing tobacco, 4.6 mg compared to 1.8 mg for cigarettes. Blood levels of nicotine throughout the day are similar among smokers and those who use smokeless tobacco.

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**Menthol Cigarettes**

- Brands contain enough menthol to produce a cool sensation in the throat when smoke is inhaled.
- Menthol cigarettes are not safer than other brands and may be even more dangerous.

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*For information about the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout®,*  
[www.greatamericansmokeout.org](http://www.greatamericansmokeout.org), *Georgia Tobacco Quit Line and Live Healthy Georgia Campaign*  
<http://health.state.ga.us/healthtopics/lhg.asp> . *Georgia Smoke Free Air Act,*  
<http://dhr.georgia.gov/gasmokefreeair>

*Sources: American Cancer Society and the Georgia Department of Human Resources*