

Addiction

Nicotine addiction also known as smoking addiction, is a condition characterized by the use of substances despite knowing the harmful consequences. This addiction is a dependency on tobacco products due to nicotine—a highly addictive chemical that can be found in tobacco.

Smoking can affect both physical and psychological health. Nicotine stimulates the release of dopamine or a “feel-good” neurotransmitter that creates the feeling of pleasure and relaxation but over time, this leads to dependence which results in more nicotine intake.

Some physical effects of nicotine are increased heart rate and blood pressure due to the stimulation of adrenal glands which releases adrenaline, constricted airways which reduces oxygen delivery to the lungs and body, and this could also reduce appetite because nicotine suppresses hunger by altering metabolic processes.

Smoking could also cause lung damage leading to chronic bronchitis, emphysema and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. This also increases the risk of heart attack, stroke and atherosclerosis. This addiction is one of the major causes of lung cancer, cancer of the mouth, esophagus, pancreas and bladder.

Smokers are more susceptible to infections and take longer to recover.

Some symptoms of nicotine addiction includes:

- Intense and frequent urges to smoke or use nicotine.
- Needing to use more nicotine over time to achieve the same effect or pleasure.
- Dependence on nicotine as stress reliever.
- Increased feelings of tension when not using nicotine.
- Mood swings—irritability, frustration, or anger, especially when unable to smoke.

Successfully treating nicotine addiction involves addressing both the physical dependence on nicotine and the behavioral habits tied to smoking. Counseling and therapy helps change thoughts and behaviors related to smoking. Motivational interviews could also build commitment and confidence to quit smoking.

References:

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/6407-addiction>

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/323465>