

“ It has become abundantly clear that, sooner or later, smoking, in whichever form and by whichever means, causes extensive health and financial damage to smokers. It is also the cause of a variety of diseases. Consequently, and on this evidence alone, smoking would be forbidden and should in no way be practiced by Muslims. Furthermore, the obligation to preserve one’s health and wealth, as well as that of society as a whole, and medical evidence now available on the dangers of smoking, further support this view. ”

**Grand Imam of Al-Azhar**



**Tobacco Quitline  
131 848**

“ . . . When you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah. ”

**Surah Al-'Imran  
3:159-160**

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## How to Help

If you would like to help sponsor MoH projects, please contact us. If you would like to donate to MoH, our account details are:

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# Islam and Tobacco

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Muslim Community Solutions for Health and Well-Being

# Smoking and your health

According to estimates, worldwide mortality from tobacco is likely to rise from about 4 million deaths per year in 1998 to about 10 million a year in 2030.

Cigarettes contain a number of toxic chemicals - each causing injury to the body. Among these main agents are nicotine, carbon monoxide and tar.

Nicotine is one of the most addictive substances known and causes increased heart rate, increased blood pressure and increased breathing. When carbon monoxide is inhaled from a cigarette, it decreases the body's ability to transport oxygen resulting in shortness of breath. The main components of tar are believed to cause genetic damage, leading to the development of cancer.

## Effects on your body

- Smokers are 22 times more likely to develop cancer (lung, mouth, tongue, oesophagus, bladder and possibly breast)
- Smoking increases the risk of developing emphysema
- Smoking increases the risk of cervical and uterine cancer
- Smokers have a 40% higher rate of developing cataracts (resulting in blindness)
- Smoking leads to macular degeneration – an incurable disease of the retina
- Smokers are three times more likely to develop middle ear infection (which can lead to meningitis and facial paralysis)
- Smoking increases the chance of dying from skin cancer
- Smoking leads to osteoporosis – a disease which results in bones breaking easier and the body taking longer to heal
- Smoking is the biggest risk factor for cardiovascular diseases (eg. Heart attacks and strokes)
- Smoking increases frequency of stomach ulcers
- Smokers are two to three times more likely to develop psoriasis
- Smoking causes Buerger's disease – inflammation of the arteries, veins and nerves (which can lead to gangrene)

# Impact of smoking

The consequence of these diseases is a decrease in physical working capacity – i.e. smokers who suffer from such diseases are less able to go to work and bring money home for the family. This in turn results in decreased economic productivity and increased social burden. This can be seen in Australia through the large amount of government money spent on hospital beds for smokers each year, as well as the increased amount of pharmaceuticals given to smokers (i.e. Increased health expenditure).

In addition, a number of household fires are caused by smokers falling asleep with a lit cigarette. This often leads to serious burns, injuries and death to others in the house (particularly children).

In 1996, the Australian National Drug Strategy estimated that the total economic cost of tobacco use in Australia to be \$12.74 billion. This included \$832.5 million in health care costs.

## Islam and smoking

Any product that may jeopardise the life or health of an individual is contrary to the spirit and guidance of Islam. Islam establishes that health is a blessing and that our body is a gift from God. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: Health and leisure are two blessings which many people do not appreciate (Al-Bukhari).

As there is no specific ruling on tobacco within the Qur'an, because tobacco was not introduced into Arabia until the 11th century, many experts in Islamic jurisprudence believe that guidelines within the Qur'an make it clear that smoking is haram (prohibited).

The Qur'an states - And do not with your own hands cast yourselves into destruction (2:195). This is contrary to the actions of a smoker. The effects of tobacco on the body have been well researched over the last 30 years, and it is now common knowledge that tobacco is linked to many diseases. As such, it can easily be seen that smoking is a means of self-destruction.

The Qur'an also states – God enjoins people not to kill themselves (4:92). This is exactly what people are doing when they smoke. It has been scientifically proven that every cigarette takes away 7 minutes from a smoker's life. Thus, with every cigarette, a smoker is killing

himself – an act prohibited in the Qur'an.

This situation also creates a social and economic burden on many families with the main income earner of the family dying earlier than their life expectancy, often leaving behind debts and young children. Tobacco also causes socio-economic problems. Nicotine is an addictive drug. For people to 'feed' this addiction, it means spending family money on cigarettes instead of more needed assets such as food or medicine. This expenditure is a form of extravagance and squandering – acts which are forbidden in Islam. The Qur'an states – But squander not your wealth in the manner of a spendthrift. Verily squanderers are the brethren of the devils (17:26).

Passive smoking is also discouraged in Islam. A saying of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is: "Cause harm neither to you nor to others". Passive smoking most often occurs from parents smoking in their homes around their children (including unborn children). Environmental Tobacco Smoke (commonly called Passive Smoking) contains all the toxic components of a cigarette but in a weaker form. Yet it can still lead to similar health problems – including respiratory infections and heart problems – as well containing over 40 chemicals known to cause cancer. This act goes against the character of the Muslim Ummah (community).

In addition, the Islamic ruling on alcohol is often used as a guideline when ruling on tobacco. In the Qur'an it is said – They ask you concerning drinking and gambling, say: in them is great sin and some profit for men, but the sin is greater than the profit (2:219). This is also true for smoking. Although smoking creates jobs for those who produce and manufacture tobacco, the damages to health far outweigh this material profit. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: You have an obligation towards your body as well an obligation towards your Lord (Al-Bukhari). In such respect, it is imperative for every Muslim to look after their health and to follow the guidelines set out in the Qur'an.

Thus, in all respects it can be seen that smoking is not permissible in Islam. This ruling not only applies to cigarettes but also to the smoking of nargile – a common practice among Arab communities in Sydney. Nargile is a tobacco water pipe whereby the smoker inhales from a mouthpiece, to draw in tobacco. Although this practice can often be combined with different flavoured tastes, Nargile is simply a different method of smoking tobacco.

Therefore, Nargile possesses all of the same health risks as smoking cigarettes, and thus, is considered haram.