

Smoking & Health Myths

'Low tar' cigarettes

Many smokers believe that switching from a medium or high tar to low tar cigarettes (formerly, misleadingly, called 'lights' or 'ultras') is healthier. Unfortunately it is not. Smokers who switch to a lower tar brand tend to compensate by dragging more deeply on their cigarette to satisfy their nicotine craving. Low tar brands also tend to burn with higher levels of carbon monoxide than medium tar brands.

Menthol cigarettes

Menthol cigarettes have all the same harmful effects as ordinary cigarettes (again often with extra carbon monoxide) and a fresh, minty flavour!

Herbal cigarettes

Herbal cigarettes also burn with very high levels of carbon monoxide and do not even have the advantage of providing the smoker with a nicotine hit!

Roll ups

Hand rolled cigarettes have the same harmful effects as a standard cigarette depending on how much tobacco is used in each roll up. Similar chemicals are added to rolling tobacco as to ready-rolled cigarettes. Without a filter, the smoker inhales more tar.

Cigars & pipes

Cigars and pipes burn with higher carbon monoxide levels than cigarettes. They also produce a lot of tar. Smokers who have switched from cigarettes to pipes and cigars tend to drag more deeply and frequently.

Cutting down

When smokers cut down on the number of cigarettes smoked daily, the effect is often similar to switching to a 'low tar' brand ie deeper inhalation and therefore fairly constant levels of nicotine and other chemicals taken into the body. There is often a tendency to focus on the remaining cigarettes and to creep back up to former levels at times of stress, celebration, temptation....Cutting down takes huge energy, tends not to last and has marginal health benefits.

Once a smoker, always a smoker.

This is definitely not true! Some people find stopping easier than others and most people need more than one attempt to stop for good. But there are 9.6 million ex smokers in the UK and most current smokers want to join them.