

Fastfacts

Nicotine is as addictive as heroin

No.4 - September 2013

Tobacco is intended to be addictive

- tobacco companies profit from creating and sustaining addiction to tobacco
 - the tobacco in cigarettes is processed to make it more addictive and hence to create and sustain dependence
 - nicotine is as addictive as heroin or cocaine
 - nicotine meets the criteria for a dependence producing drug
 - nicotine delivered through tobacco not only comes with a variety of toxins but is more addictive than nicotine in a pure form
-

How nicotine works

- it takes ten seconds from inhaling cigarette smoke for nicotine to reach the brain
 - nicotine triggers the release of dopamine in the brain - a chemical linked to feelings of pleasure
 - as smokers begin to associate smoking with feeling good, additional cues such as the taste and feel of the cigarette or the times when they need to smoke become part of the addiction
 - trying to quit causes physical withdrawal symptoms because of the nicotine
-

The impact on smokers

- most tobacco-caused diseases and premature death can be considered by-products of addiction
- cigarettes kill half of lifelong regular smokers, and for those an average of 22 years life expectancy will be lost
- 73% of smokers – around 700,000 people - in Scotland want to quit
- people are four times more likely to quit if they use NHS specialist support
- support to quit is free and readily available (8am to 10pm) from Smokeline on 0800 84 84 84