

MYTH & FACT

Let's separate myths from facts
and discover the **truth** about tobacco!



RCTC

Developed by:

Resource Center for Tobacco Control



www.rctcpgi.org

MYTH & FACTS

Booklet

Tobacco Myth & Fact

1st Edition – 2026

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Disclaimer

The information presented in this booklet is intended for educational and awareness purposes only.



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Contact

Email: rctcindia26@gmail.com

Website: www.rctcpgi.org

PREFACE



Prof. Sonu Goel

Executive Director,
Resource Centre for
Tobacco Control (RCTC)
PGIMER, Chandigarh

MYTH

"It's just a myth,
not harmful!"



In a world flooded with information, myths about tobacco and nicotine products continue to mislead people, especially young generations. Separating fact from fiction is essential to making informed choices and protecting public health.



"**Tobacco Myth & Fact**" is a simple yet powerful resource designed to challenge common misconceptions with evidence-based facts. Whether it is about cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, e-cigarettes, or emerging nicotine products, this booklet aims to empower readers with accurate knowledge and inspire healthier decisions.



I congratulate the team for developing this timely initiative and hope it serves as a valuable tool for students, educators, healthcare professionals, policymakers, and the community at large.



Together, let us replace myths with facts and move closer to a **tobacco-free future**.

FACT

"Facts empower,
myths endanger!"



**Let's choose facts over myths
for a healthier, tobacco-free future!** ➔

MESSAGE



Dr. Rana J Singh

Director, Southeast Asia Region
Vital Strategies

Rjsingh@vitalstrategies.org

MYTH

"It's just a myth,
not harmful!"



Tobacco-related myths and misinformation continue to undermine public health efforts across the world.



In an era where new nicotine and tobacco products are rapidly emerging, providing people with **clear, evidence-based information** has become more important than ever.



I appreciate the initiative behind "**Tobacco Myth & Fact**", comprising **more than 50 important myths and facts** related to tobacco and nicotine products. Presented in a simple, engaging, and easy-to-understand manner, this booklet will be highly useful for students, educators, healthcare professionals, policymakers, and the wider community.



By challenging misconceptions and promoting scientific facts, this resource can play an important role in **strengthening awareness and supporting tobacco control efforts**.



I congratulate the entire team at RCTC, PGIMER Chandigarh for developing this valuable publication and hope it contributes meaningfully toward building a healthier, **tobacco-free future**.

FACT

"Facts empower,
myths endanger!"



**Let's choose facts over myths
for a healthier, tobacco-free future!**



MESSAGE



Dr. Rakesh Gupta

President
Rajasthan Cancer Foundation,
Jaipur

MYTH

"It's just a myth,
not harmful!"



Tobacco remains one of the most significant preventable causes of cancer and premature death. Yet, many myths and misconceptions continue to obscure the real dangers associated with tobacco and nicotine products, particularly among young people.



I commend the initiative to develop "**tobacco Myth & Fact**", a resource that presents scientific evidence in a simple and engaging manner. By dispelling common myths and promoting factual understanding, this booklet has the potential to empower individuals to make informed decisions and protect their health.



I hope this publication reaches a wide audience and contributes meaningfully to our collective efforts toward a **tobacco-free** and non-communicable disease-free (**NCD-free**). ”

FACT

"Facts empower,
myths endanger!"



**Let's choose facts over myths
for a healthier, tobacco-free future!**



MEET THE TEAM

BEHIND THIS BOOKLET

This booklet was developed through collective efforts, research, and expert guidance to spread awareness and inspire a **tobacco-free future**.



Prof. Sonu Goel

Professor & President,
RCTC, PGIMER Chandigarh

Providing academic leadership
and expert guidance in public
health and tobacco control.



Mr. Rajeev Kumar

Project Coordinator,
PGIMER Chandigarh

Contributing to research
coordination, mentorship, and
overall academic direction
of the booklet.



Mohammad Rajab

PhD Scholar &
RCTC Volunteer

Supporting research, content
development, and overall
coordination for the booklet.

♥ SPECIAL THANKS ♥

Heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed
to making this awareness initiative possible. ♥

Together, we can build a
tobacco-free future!



Meet Karnav & Riya

Karnav and Riya are two curious friends.

They love asking questions, exploring new ideas, and learning **the truth** about tobacco and its impact on our lives.

One day, they heard many different things about tobacco use—some said it was **helpful**, some said it was **harmful**.

Confused but curious, they decided to find out the **real truth**.

In this booklet, **Karnav** and **Riya** take you along on their journey to separate **MYTH** & **FACT** about tobacco use.

They will **question**, **think**, and discover—and you can think along with them and choose the **facts** for yourself!

Are you ready to explore with them?

Let's begin the adventure of truth!



Turn the page... **the truth** is waiting!





BEFORE WE START...



BECOME A TRUTH DETECTIVE!



I heard many things about tobacco... but are they **true**?



Help us find out what is **Myth** and what is **Fact**!

WHILE READING THIS BOOKLET, REMEMBER:



THINK
before believing.

☐

ASK
questions.

☐

LOOK
for facts.

☐

CHOOSE
healthy habits.

☐

MISSION:

Can you help Karnav and Riya become **TRUTH CHAMPIONS**?



➔ Turn the page and **start the adventure!**



MYTH

“Tobacco increases focus and concentration.”

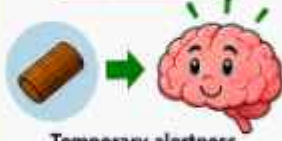


FACT

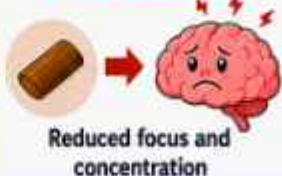
Tobacco may give **short-term alertness**, but it **reduces focus and concentration** in the long run.



SHORT TERM



LONG TERM



Your brain works better without tobacco.

MYTH

“Smoking helps to relieve stress.”



It helps me feel relaxed and less stressed!



FACT

Smoking **increases stress and anxiety** over time.



OVER TIME, SMOKING **INCREASES STRESS AND ANXIETY.**



Nicotine causes a temporary feeling of relief, but later it makes stress and anxiety **worse**.



Breathe, exercise, or talk to a friend instead.

MYTH

“ Use
Gutka and Khaini
instead of
Smoking. ”



It is not smoke,
so it must be
safer!



FACT

Smokeless
tobacco causes
MOUTH CANCER
and
GUM DAMAGE.



MOUTH CANCER



Smokeless tobacco contains harmful chemicals that can cause cancer of the mouth, tongue and cheeks.

GUM DAMAGE



It causes gum recession, bleeding, bad breath and tooth loss.



No form of tobacco is safe.

MYTH

“One puff
will not make
me addicted.”



FACT

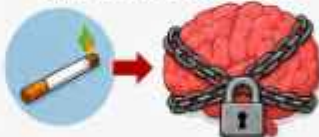
Nicotine is
highly addictive.
Even **occasional** use
can lead to addiction.



Just one puff...
no harm!



NICOTINE AFFECTS YOUR BRAIN
AND CREATES ADDICTION.



Craving



Dependence



Hard to quit

EVEN OCCASIONAL USE
CAN LEAD TO ADDICTION.



Better never to start.

MYTH

“Tobacco helps in digestion.”



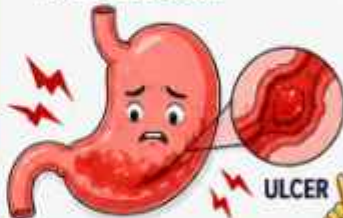
It helps me digest food better.

FACT

Tobacco **damages** your **stomach** and can cause **ulcers**. It does not improve digestion.



TOBACCO DAMAGES YOUR STOMACH



TOBACCO IS **NOT** MEDICINE. It does not improve digestion.



Healthy foods help digestion, not tobacco.

MYTH

“Tobacco is good for pain relief.”



It helps me relieve pain.

FACT

Tobacco contains **7,000+ harmful chemicals**. It is **not a medicine** and does not treat pain.



TOBACCO CONTAINS
7,000+ HARMFUL CHEMICALS



These chemicals can damage almost every part of your body.



TOBACCO IS
NOT A MEDICINE
AND DOES NOT
TREAT PAIN.



For any pain,
consult a doctor and
follow the right
treatment.



Consult a doctor for pain relief.

MYTH

Tobacco sales help
the nation's revenue.



FACT

Government spends **>5X**
in healthcare than its
earning by taxing tobacco.



Health is real wealth.

MYTH

"I have an uncle who smokes daily and now we are celebrating his 90th birthday."



FACT

He is lucky but mostly lifetime smokers live 6 to 10 years lesser.



One example does not change the risk.

MYTH

“Tobacco gives a sense of joy by dopamine’s action in the brain.”



FACT

Tobacco briefly increases dopamine but damages the brain and can lead to dependence.



Brief increase in dopamine



Brain damage

Can lead to dependence



Affects memory and concentration



Causes mood swings and stress



Makes you dependent



➔ **Natural happiness is healthier than nicotine.**

MYTH

"Tobacco control
anger."



THINKS IT
CONTROLS ANGER



- ✓ Feels powerful
- ✓ Thinks it calms down
- ✓ Believes it helps in stress

FACT

Tobacco actually
increases irritability and
stress over a time.



WHAT REALLY HAPPENS



Affects brain
chemicals



Increases
irritability



Leads to more
stress and
anxiety



Drains mental
energy over
a time



Calm your mind with breathing, not tobacco.

MYTH

“This is just
for fun
it has nothing
to do with health.”



It's just once in
a while for fun.
It can't harm me!

FACT

Even occasional
tobacco use
harms your body
and can start
addiction.



EVEN OCCASIONAL
TOBACCO USE
HARMS YOUR BODY.



Damages
lungs



Increases risk
of heart disease



Weakens overall
health



IT CAN START
ADDICTION.

Addiction can take
control of your life.



Your health is not a joke.

MYTH

“Using paan masala while driving keep sleep away.”



- ✓ Feels active
- ✓ Keeps sleep away
- ✓ Helps to stay alert

FACT

Smoking or chewing tobacco or paan masala to stay awake increases risks of accidents (RTAs).



- ! Slower reaction time
- ! Poor concentration
- ! Higher risk of accidents
- ! Danger to your life and others



Take rest, don't take tobacco.

MYTH

“Eat tobacco to lose weight.”



FACT

Yes, you will stay thin but the cost of higher risks of many fatal illnesses “Head to Toe” and shorter life span.



HIGHER RISKS “HEAD TO TOE”



SHORTER LIFE SPAN



Healthy diet and exercise are the right way to lose weight.



MYTH

"Smoking is cool because film stars endorse tobacco, so nothing will happen to me."



SMOKING IS
COOL!

- ✗ Looks stylish
- ✗ Everyone does it
- ✗ Nothing will happen to me

FACT

Film stars get paid to glamorise tobacco products use but do they care for your health?

Definitely NOT!



FILM STARS GET PAID

to promote tobacco products.



THE TRUTH

Tobacco is harmful for everyone.



DO THEY CARE ABOUT YOUR HEALTH?

DEFINITELY NOT!



It's just an ad for us.



Don't copy actors, protect your health.



MYTH

“Smoking cigarettes = macho man.”



FACT

Smoking weakens your **lungs, stamina, and body.**

It also weakens the youth **sexually.**



▶ WEAKENS
YOUR LUNGS



▶ REDUCES
STAMINA
AND ENERGY



▶ WEAKENS YOUTH
SEXUALLY



Real strength means staying healthy.



MYTH

“Labourers and daily workers get instant energy from tobacco and chuna.”



FACT

Tobacco may give short-term alertness, but in the long run it **damages health**, causing **poorer health**, **reduced stamina**, and **lower work capacity**.



SHORT TERM

May give short-term alertness.



LONG TERM

Poorer health, reduced stamina, lower work capacity.



BETTER CHOICE



FOOD



WATER



REST



Real energy comes from food, water, and rest.



MYTH

“Quitting after many years has no benefit.”



I have smoked for so long. Quitting now won't help.



FACT

Health benefits begin **soon after** quitting tobacco.



It's never too late to quit.

MYTH

“Tobacco is safe if you exercise regularly.”



FACT

Exercise **can not reverse** the toxic effects of tobacco smoke.



Fitness can not cancel tobacco harm.

MYTH

“ Tobacco smoke does not affect children.”



FACT

Children exposed to tobacco smoke suffer more from lung and ear infections.



Protect children from smoke.

MYTH

“Tobacco with paan is not harmful.”



Not harmful!

FACT

Tobacco containing paan increase risk of oral cancer, heart attack and stroke.



INCREASE RISK OF
ORAL CANCER



INCREASE RISK OF
HEART ATTACK



INCREASE RISK OF
STROKE



Your health matters.

MYTH

“Smoking occasionally at parties is safe.”



FACT

Even thinking of starting tobacco is a sign of **poor judgment**.

Tobacco is **toxic**, **addictive**, and **harmful** from the very first use.



TOXIC

Damages your body and organs.



ADDICTIVE

Leads to addiction.



HARMFUL

Increases risk of serious diseases from the very first use.



No level of smoking is safe.

MYTH

“Tobacco use is sign of maturity.”



It makes me look grown-up and mature.



FACT

Tobacco addiction reflects **brain dependency**, not maturity.



Tobacco changes the brain and creates **dependency**. It is about addiction, not maturity.



Real maturity means making healthy choices.

MYTH

“Spitting tobacco removes harmful chemicals.”



I'll just spit it out.
It's harmless!

FACT

Tobacco chemicals are **absorbed through oral lining** even if spitted later.



TOBACCO CHEMICALS



Chemicals are absorbed through the oral lining into your body – even if you spit it out later.



Harm starts the moment you use tobacco.

MYTH

“Smoking does not affect fertility.”



It won't affect my future.

FACT

Smoking **damages** sperm quality and fertility.



SMOKING DAMAGES
SPERM QUALITY



Healthy Sperm



Damaged Sperm



RESULT
LOWER
FERTILITY



Protect your future health.

MYTH

“Tobacco use does not affect mental health.”



It doesn't affect my mental health.

FACT

Tobacco use **increases** occurrence of **depression** and **anxiety** disorders.



TOBACCO USE INCREASES OCCURRENCE OF **DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY DISORDERS.**



DEPRESSION



ANXIETY DISORDERS



Mental health matters.

MYTH

“Tobacco is safe if started after adulthood.”



I'll start after I become an adult. Then it will be safe.

FACT

Starting tobacco at **any age** **increases** **disease risk.**



STARTING TOBACCO AT ANY AGE...



As a **teen** increases risk of addiction and future diseases.



As a **young adult** increases risk of heart disease, lung problems and cancer.



As an **adult** increases risk of serious diseases and early death.



There is no safe age to start.

MYTH

“Tobacco use improves social bonding.”



FACT

Tobacco *does not* improve relationships; moreover, it *harms one's health.*



Real connection don't need tobacco.

MYTH

“Smoking reduces blood pressure.”



It lowers my blood pressure.

FACT

Smoking **increases** the risk of **cardiovascular diseases** and puts **extra strain** on the heart.



SMOKING INCREASES RISK OF CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES



High blood pressure



Heart attack risk



Stroke risk



Smoking stresses your heart.

MYTH & FACT

Let's uncover more myths and choose the facts!

1

MYTH

E-cigarettes are harmless.



FACT

E-cigarettes still contain nicotine and many harmful chemicals that can damage your lungs and brain.



2

MYTH

Herbal cigarettes are safe because they are made from herbs.



FACT

Herbal cigarettes still produce smoke that contains harmful toxins and can cause serious diseases.



3

MYTH

Vaping is just flavored water vapor.



FACT

Vape aerosol contains nicotine, heavy metals, flavoring chemicals and other toxic substances that can harm your body.



4

MYTH

Young people cannot get addicted quickly.



FACT

Young brains are still developing and can become addicted to nicotine faster and easier than adults.



★ Think smart. Choose facts. Stay healthy. Stay tobacco-free! ★

MYTH & FACT

Let's uncover more myths and choose the facts!

1

MYTH

Drinking water removes tobacco toxins from the body.



FACT

Water helps keep you hydrated but it cannot remove the toxins or damage caused by tobacco.



2

MYTH

Brushing teeth removes the effects of tobacco.



FACT

Brushing keeps your mouth clean but it cannot remove tobacco chemicals. Tobacco still damages your gums, teeth and oral tissues.



3

MYTH

Strong or fit people are less affected by tobacco.



FACT

Tobacco harms everyone. It can damage lungs, heart and other organs no matter how fit or strong you are.



4

MYTH

Tobacco improves sports performance and gives more energy.



FACT

Tobacco reduces stamina and lung function. It makes you tired easily and lowers your performance.



★ 🖐️ Know the truth. Make the right choice. Stay healthy. Stay tobacco-free! ★

MYTH & FACT

Let's uncover more myths and choose the facts!

1

MYTH

Smoking outside protects my family completely.



FACT

Tobacco smoke particles can stick to your clothes, hair, skin and spread to your family. This is called third-hand smoke.



2

MYTH

Sharing cigarettes with friends is harmless.



FACT

Sharing cigarettes can spread germs and increase the risk of addiction and serious diseases.



3

MYTH

Tobacco helps make more friends.



FACT

Real friends care about your health and happiness. You don't need tobacco to be accepted or to make friends.



4

MYTH

Quitting tobacco suddenly is dangerous.



FACT

Quitting tobacco at any stage is safe and beneficial. Your body starts healing soon after you quit and your health improves.



★  Know the truth. Make the right choice. Stay healthy. Stay tobacco-free! ★

MYTH & FACT

Let's uncover more myths and choose the facts!

1

MYTH

Smoking after meals helps digestion.



FACT

Smoking can increase acidity and cause digestive problems like heartburn and stomach upset.



2

MYTH

Tobacco keeps you warm in winter.



FACT

Tobacco narrows blood vessels and does not warm the body. It can make your hands and feet even colder.



3

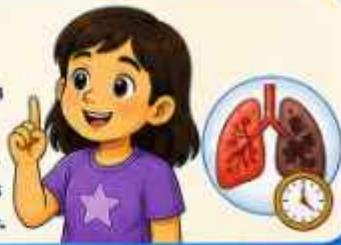
MYTH

If I am young, tobacco damage can recover automatically.



FACT

Damage from tobacco can begin early and affect your body for life. It does not always recover on its own.



★ 🖐️ Think smart. Choose facts. Stay healthy. Stay tobacco-free! ★

MY TOBACCO-FREE PROMISE

I know the facts. I make smart choices.

I choose a healthy life! ❤️

**I CHOOSE HEALTH,
NOT TOBACCO!**

I PROMISE TO:



I will stay tobacco-free.

☐

I will choose **healthy habits**
like good food, exercise and enough sleep.

☐

I will not believe myths
without checking **facts**.

☐

I will **help** my friends and family
stay healthy and tobacco-free.

☐

I will say **"NO"** to tobacco
and peer pressure.

☐

My Name :



My Signature :



Date :

★ Small choices today create a **healthy future**.

★ Be smart. Choose facts. Stay healthy. Stay tobacco-free! ★





GREAT JOB, TRUTH EXPLORER!

You learned myths and facts.

Now become a
health hero! 



REMEMBER!



**CHOOSE
HEALTHY HABITS**



Eat well, exercise,
drink water and
get enough sleep.



**SAY NO
TO TOBACCO**

Tobacco harms your
body, mind and dreams.

Say "NO" today and
stay strong!



**SHARE FACTS
WITH FRIENDS**



Help your friends
understand the truth,
not the myths.



**ASK FOR HELP
IF NEEDED**



It's okay to ask for help.
You are not alone.
We are here for you.

NEED HELP?

Talk to someone you trust.



PARENTS

They care for
you and want
you to be safe
and healthy.



TEACHERS

They guide you
and help you
make the right
choices.



COUNSELORS

They listen to you
and support you
whenever you
need help.



HEALTH WORKERS

They can give you
the right advice
and support for a
healthy life.



You can also call the National Tobacco Quitline:

1800-11-2356

(Toll Free)



BE A TRUTH CHAMPION. STAY TOBACCO-FREE!





VISION & MISSION



VISION

RCTC serves as a Centre of Excellence that advances evidence-based tobacco control through capacity building, knowledge dissemination, collaborative research, policy support, and technical assistance, towards promoting a **tobacco-free life**.



Capacity Building



Knowledge Dissemination



Collaborative Research



Policy Support



Technical Assistance



MISSION

Our mission is to nurture and empower tobacco control enthusiasts by generating and synthesising contextual evidence, disseminating reliable, relevant, and timely information, and undertaking capacity building to strengthen tobacco control efforts across policy, practice, research, and advocacy in the country, with the ultimate goal of achieving

तंबाकू-मुक्त भारत (Tobacco-Free India).



Through networking, fostering collaborations, and supporting stakeholders, we aim to contribute meaningfully to the national goal of achieving **तंबाकू-मुक्त भारत**.



Collaboration



Awareness



Health



Policy & Advocacy



Together Towards a Tobacco-Free India



DEVELOPED BY:

RESOURCE CENTRE FOR TOBACCO CONTROL (RCTC)

Dept. of Community Medicine &
School of Public Health, PGIMER Chandigarh



Website:
www.rctcpgi.org



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New Delhi - 110025
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