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# Hookah Health Hazards

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# Hookah Health Hazards

Ramen noodles, cramming for tests, hooking up and boozing. Ahhh, the life of a college student. None of these activities scream “healthy.” We often don’t think about what we’re putting into our bodies. Young adults have a reputation of being a very unhealthy demographic, and some students add to that by smoking tobacco in different forms. Hookah has become a popular tobacco choice throughout the United States in recent years, and particularly in Ames with the opening of the Chicha Shack in 2004.

A hookah is an instrument for smoking tobacco. The smoke is filtered through water before being inhaled by the user. It is popular and common because it is legal for anyone over the age of 18.

Ray Rodriguez, health promotion coordinator for the Thielen Student Health Center, says the short-term effects of smoking hookah are similar to that of a cigarette. This includes relaxation and euphoria for the user, commonly called a “buzz.” Long-term effects of using hookah are similar to cigarettes as well, including many forms of cancer and addiction to nicotine.

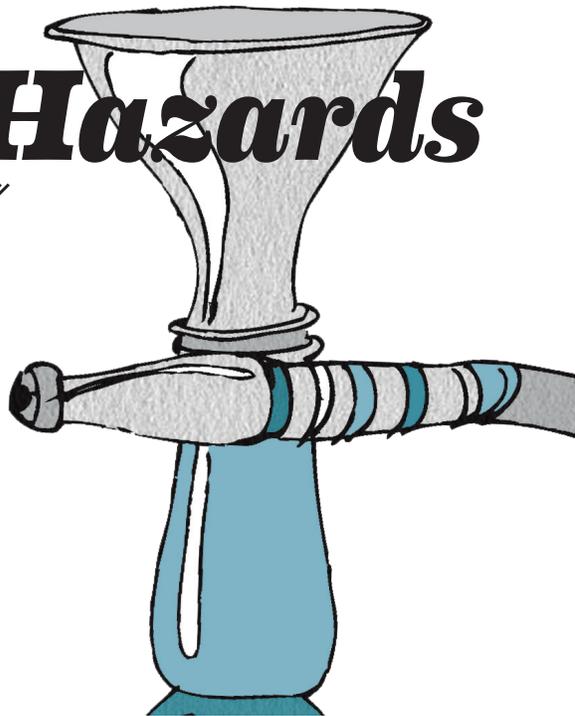
Because it is filtered through water, each hookah inhale is less potent than smoking tobacco in the form of cigarettes or cigars. However, a typical cigarette takes about 10 minutes to smoke, while smoking hookah with friends as a social activity can last 45 minutes to an hour. This can really add up in terms of nicotine consumption, considering how many times you could inhale within the hour.

Reports by the World Health Organization and the American Cancer Society have shown that *in a one-hour hookah session, users consume about 100 to 200 times the smoke and about 70 times more nicotine than they would in one cigarette.* Rodriguez says countries with high use of hookah, such as Middle Eastern countries where hookah originates, smoke an average of 15 minutes compared to the United States average of nearly an hour. In addition, alcohol is often served at hookah bars, which adds to unhealthy behavior.

Nico Martinez, an avid hookah smoker and senior in materials engineering, says students are not informed to the fullest extent they could be about the health effects of hookah. “I think students who smoke hookah regularly are the type of students who do not necessarily care about the safeness of hookah smoke and use other drugs, therefore it may not be of great importance to them.”

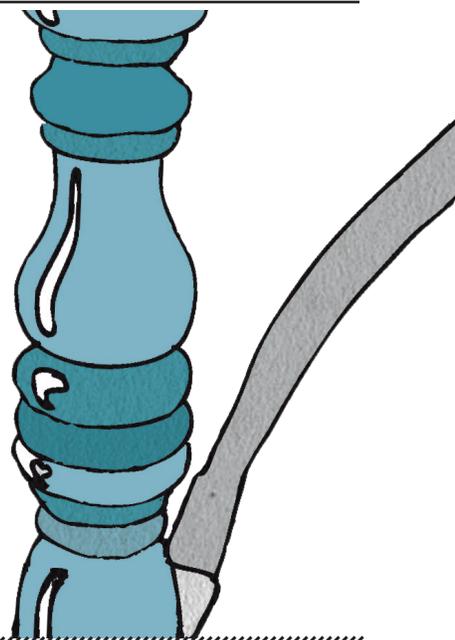
“I don’t usually think about the health effects,” says Martinez. “These days, smoking hookah is a social event. The bars are designated as a place to sit back, relax, have a smoke and enjoy the company of friends and acquaintances. That’s all I’m there for.”

As college students, we should be informed of these effects, but not necessarily rule the activity out completely. Hanging out with friends while enjoying hookah is not horrible, just don’t overindulge and add to our unhealthy stereotype.



By: NIKKI KERNS

Illustration RYAN HUBBARD



chilly night?

## Warm Up WITH A HOT TODDY

By CHELSEA EVERS

Photography DAVID DERONG



Check out  
[ethomagazine.org](http://ethomagazine.org)  
for more drink recipes!

No, we don’t mean you should listen to Usher’s latest album (though we won’t argue if you do). A real hot toddy is a hard cider beverage often suggested as a remedy for those with a classic cold—or those who just want to have a fun night. Try one next time you get a case of the winter blues.

Heat up the honey and lemon juice in the microwave for 30 seconds. Then stir in the hot cider and whiskey and drink up. The only way this beverage would be better is if Usher himself served it to you.

1½ OZ. WHISKEY + 1 OZ. HONEY + ½ OZ. LEMON JUICE + 3 OZ. HEATED APPLE CIDER