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## **Hookah smoking: an emerging crisis**

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A hookah or water pipe is an Arabic pipe in which fruited scented tobacco is burned and smoked.

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States; it is linked to cancer, cardiovascular and pulmonary disease and even diabetes. Many individuals believe there is no health risk associated with hookah smoking, and it is a safer alternative than smoking cigarettes.

This is simply not true.

Hookah smoking is popular among young adults, and it has become common at colleges, all the way down to middle schools.

Not only is hookah smoking associated to the same diseases as other tobacco products, individuals who smoke from hookah are at a risk of developing herpes, hepatitis, tuberculosis and even mononucleosis. Hookah smoking is viewed as a social activity. It is usually done in groups, and the stem of the hookah pipe is passed around, which leads to the oral diseases.

It is relatively inexpensive and extremely dangerous. A typical one hour hookah session exposes the smoker to 100 to 200 times the amount of smoke inhaled than one cigarette.

The smoker tends to take a longer drag, and hold the smoke in their lungs at longer periods of time.

The sweet flavor of the tobacco masks the harsh effect of tobacco making it more tolerable, especially to younger smokers.

With the growing concern of hookah smoking and young adults, hookah smoking is prohibited in college dormitories.

State law prohibits selling, furnishing or giving tobacco products to anyone under 19 years of age.

Tobacco use is addictive and there is help out there for individuals who want to quit smoking. In New Jersey, you can call 1-866-NJSTOPS. There is also a website [www.njquitline.org](http://www.njquitline.org) for help.

Cindy Meakem

Tobacco Free for a Healthy New Jersey