

Health Dangers of Youth Hookah Smoking

Karen Blumenfeld, Esq. Executive Director • Alan Kantz, Program Manager • Viraj Bhatt, BS, Rutgers University



GASP

Background

- **Hookah** (shisha, goza, narghile) is a water pipe used to smoke maassel (flavored tobacco). Maassel is charcoal-heated, creating smoke that passes through water, and inhaled via a hose.
- Originated 4 centuries ago (Asia/Africa).
- Increased popularity in USA since 1990s.
- **Fruit/candy flavors** appeal to young adults.

Harmful Health Effects

- **Hookah smoke contains numerous toxins** known to cause lung cancer, heart disease and adverse effect on pregnancy. 2005 World Health Organization (WHO) Advisory Note.
- **In one session, a hookah smoker inhales up to an equivalent of 100 cigarettes.** Hookah smoke contains nicotine, the addictive component of tobacco smoke, tobacco-related carcinogens, tar, carbon monoxide (CO), and heavy metals.
- Hookah smokers have CO blood levels of 40-70 ppm, twice as high as a heavy smoker. Normal nonsmoker CO levels are 3 ppm.
- **"Sharing a hookah may increase the risk of transmission of tuberculosis, viruses such as herpes or hepatitis, and other illnesses"** via communal use of non-sterile apparatus (CDC). Hookah smoking may spread H1N1 flu.
- **Individual mouth pieces do not eliminate the risk of transmitting infectious diseases.** 17% of TB cases in the eastern Mediterranean are attributable to smoking of water pipes (WHO).
- Secondhand hookah smoke has the same disease risks caused by secondhand cigarette smoke (WHO). **SHS levels in hookah lounges can be twice the levels in smoky bars.** (Roswell Park Cancer Institute, Wake Forest University School of Medicine)

New Jersey State Laws

- **2006 New Jersey Smoke-Free Air Act (NJSFAA)** allows a smoking lounge only if the lounge was already established as of 12/31/04, strict enclosure and ventilation requirements are met, any food service is "incidental" (minor and occasional) and a smoking lounge waiver is obtained every year.
- **2007 NJ Department of Health Regulations** that implement the NJSFAA clarify that a tobacco retail establishment (TRE) waiver allowing smoking at a business is solely for sampling of product to be consumed off-premises. Cannot use a TRE waiver for an indoor smoking lounge. No food/beverage served if granted a TRE waiver.
- **NJ Smokefree College Residential Housing Act** requires all college-owned or operated residential housing on and off-campus to be 100% smokefree.
- **State law** prohibits the selling, furnishing or giving of tobacco in any form to a person under age 19.

Young Adult Use Prevalence

- 2010 NJ Youth Tobacco Survey (NJDHSS): **11.4% of NJ high school students reported smoking hookah, an 18% increase from 2008;** 4.1% of middle school students reported smoking hookah.
- 2007 American Legacy Foundation: 42% of young adults (ages 18-24) surveyed believe that hookah smoking is less dangerous than cigarette smoking; 32% believe that hookah smoking is less addictive than smoking cigarettes.
- 2008 University of Pittsburgh survey: **40.5% of 647 students reported smoking a hookah;** 88% would smoke hookah again. 52.1% believed tobacco smoking from a water pipe was less addictive than cigarette smoking.

