

THEY PUT WHAT IN A CIGARETTE?!

There's a lot more than tobacco in cigarettes, spit tobacco and secondhand smoke. There are plenty of chemicals that can also be found in everyday household products. For this activity, you will create a display that tells others about these ingredients and exposes the truth.

AGE GROUP: Any age, however, younger youth will need to be supervised.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: It only takes one, but the more the merrier!

TIME: 3–4 weeks.

RESOURCES: As many household items as you can find (5 to 15 items.) See below for details.

COST: If you can't find any of the ingredients, you may want to buy them. Keep it under \$20.

Background:

Almost every product has a list of ingredients somewhere on the label. So isn't it strange that there isn't a list of ingredients on a pack of cigarettes? If there were, it would be a really, really long list! Seriously. There are over 4000 chemicals in a single puff of cigarette smoke, and 69 of them are known carcinogens (that means they cause cancer)! No wonder Big Tobacco is ashamed to show what they put in their products. If customers knew the kinds of things they were inhaling everyday, they probably wouldn't smoke anymore. It is definitely time to expose the truth behind these ingredients! Check out www.whatareyousmoking.org for more information.

Use the list below to explain to people some of the chemicals that are in tobacco products and secondhand smoke:

Arsenic: used in rat poison and pesticides.

Acetic Acid: found in vinegar, hair dye, and photo developing fluid.

Acetone: a main ingredient in paint thinner and fingernail polish remover.

Ammonia: a typical household cleaning fluid.

Benzene: found in gasoline.

Butane: chemical found in lighter fluid, pesticides and paints.

Cadmium: found in batteries and artist's paints.

Carbon Monoxide: a poisonous gas found in car exhaust, as well as from other sources.

DDT: a chemical formerly used as an insecticide.

Formaldehyde: used to embalm dead bodies.

This embalming fluid is often used to preserve small animals in biology classes, so check with your science teacher to find this one.

Hydrazine: used in rocket fuel.

Hydrogen Cyanide: used as a poison in gas chambers and chemical weapons.

Lead: a toxic metal that used to be found in some paints.

Naphthalene: used in mothballs and some paints.

Nitrobenzene: used as a solvent in petroleum refining.

Phenol: used in disinfectants and plastics.

Polonium-210: a highly radioactive element.

Stearic acid: found in candles.

Hydrogen Cyanide: used as a poison in gas chambers and chemical weapons



So, now that you know all the nasty things mixed into cigarettes, spit tobacco and secondhand smoke, what can you do? Tell everyone else!

Day of event:

- Set up your materials. These should be household products that you have found contain the ingredients from the list. You should have collected these from your house, or from friends and neighbors. Keep in mind that you can use an empty container too.
- Keep these products tightly sealed at all times. After the event return them to where you borrowed them from.
- Explain each product to your audience, including the chemicals in it that are also in tobacco products. If you are at a health fair or similar event, set the products on a table with a list of other ingredients that can be found in cigarettes.
- Be prepared to answer questions and back up your research.
- Point out that the labels on many of the products have distinct warnings that advise emergency assistance if the product somehow enters the body. Isn't it odd that these poisonous ingredients are inhaled by smokers and those exposed to secondhand smoke everyday?

Arsenic: used in rat poison and pesticides

