

Bidis And Kreteks



- Bidis are small, thin, hand-rolled cigarettes comprised of tobacco.
- Kreteks—also referred to as clove cigarettes— contain a mixture of tobacco, cloves, and other additives.
- Bidis and kreteks have high concentrations of nicotine, a highly addictive chemical that puts a person at risk for becoming a lifelong smoker and exposing them to the many harmful chemicals in tobacco, including cancer and heart disease.
- Help is available for individuals who want to stop smoking bidis and kreteks. No one has to do it alone.

What Are Bidis And Kreteks?

Bidis are small, thin, hand-rolled cigarettes imported to the United States, primarily from India and other Southeast Asian countries. They comprise tobacco wrapped in a tendu or temburni leaf (plants native to Asia) and may be secured with a colorful string at one or both ends. Bidis can be flavored (e.g., chocolate, cherry, mango) or unflavored.

Kreteks—also referred to as clove cigarettes—are imported from Indonesia and typically contain a mixture of tobacco, cloves, and other additives.

Bidis and kreteks have higher concentrations of nicotine, tar, and carbon monoxide than conventional cigarettes sold in the United States. Neither bidis nor kreteks are safe alternatives to conventional cigarettes.

What Are The Health Risks Of Smoking Bidis and Kreteks?

Bidis—Because of the low prevalence of use, a limited amount of research on the long-term health effects of bidis has been conducted in the United States. However, research studies from India indicate that bidi smoking is associated with cancer and other adverse health conditions.

- Bidis are a combustible tobacco product. Smoke from a bidi contains three to five times the amount of nicotine as a regular cigarette and places users at risk for nicotine addiction.
- Bidi smoking increases the risk for oral cancer, lung cancer, stomach cancer, and esophageal cancer.
- Bidi smoking is associated with a more than threefold increased risk for coronary heart disease and acute myocardial infarction (heart attack).
- Bidi smoking is associated with emphysema and a nearly fourfold increased risk for chronic bronchitis.

Kreteks—A limited amount of research on the long-term health effects of kreteks has been conducted in the United States due to the low prevalence of use. However, research studies from Indonesia indicate that kretek smoking is associated with lung problems.

- Kretek smoking is associated with an increased risk for acute lung injury (i.e., lung damage that can include a range of characteristics, such as decreased oxygen, fluid in the lungs, leakage from capillaries, and inflammation), especially among susceptible individuals with asthma or respiratory infections.
- Regular kretek smokers have 13 to 20 times the risk for abnormal lung function (e.g., airflow obstruction or reduced oxygen absorption) compared with nonsmokers.



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What Is Nicotine And Is It Dangerous?

Nicotine is the chemical found in tobacco products like bidis and kreteks that is responsible for addiction. When a person uses bidis, kreteks, or other tobacco products, nicotine is quickly absorbed into their body and goes directly to their brain. Nicotine activates areas of the brain that make an individual feel satisfied and happy. Whether the person smokes, vapes, or dips, the nicotine they put in their bodies is dangerously addictive and can be harmful.

Nicotine can lead to addiction, which puts people at risk of becoming lifelong smokers and exposing them to the many harmful chemicals in tobacco. These chemicals cause cancer and harm almost every organ in the human body. Teens are especially sensitive to nicotine's addictive effects because their brains are still developing and this makes it easier to get hooked. Using nicotine at their age can also rewire their brain to become more easily addicted to other drugs.

Nicotine can have other long-lasting effects on an adolescent's brain development, making it harder for them to concentrate, learn, and control their impulses.

What Does Nicotine Addiction Look Like?

Nicotine addiction can look different from person to person. Even if an individual only uses bidis, kreteks, or other tobacco products once in a while, they can be addicted and can have a hard time quitting.

Some signs that indicate a person is addicted to nicotine include:

- Cravings or feeling like they really need to use tobacco products
- Going out of their way to get tobacco products
- Feeling anxious or irritable if they want to use tobacco products but can't
- Continuing to use tobacco products because they find it hard to stop

When an individual is addicted to nicotine, they may experience symptoms of nicotine withdrawal after they stop using tobacco products. Craving tobacco products like bidis or kreteks, feeling sad or irritable, or having trouble sleeping are some common symptoms of withdrawal. These symptoms are usually strongest in the first week after quitting, but they are only temporary.

Is There Help Available For A Person Who Wants To Quit Smoking Bidis or Kreteks?

Yes. A person does not have to do it alone. They can call Connecticut's Quitline (1.800.QUIT.NOW) for information, resources, and support. Those attempting to quit can tell their friends and family that they're quitting and will need their support. An individual can also talk with their doctor about their plans to quit and ask him/her for help.

Connecticut Resources

CT Department of Mental
Health and Addiction Services
www.ct.gov/DMHAS

CT Quitline
www.quitnow.net/Connecticut
1.800.QUIT.NOW (784.8669)

National Resources

Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/tobacco

Smokefree.gov
<https://smokefree.gov/>