



**City of  
Richmond:  
Exploring the  
Health Effects  
of Cigar Use**



*Presented by: Ashley Duyker  
Community Action Coordinator  
Canadian Cancer Society, BCY  
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**Myth: Cigars are a safer alternative to cigarettes**


**Fact: According to the American Cancer Society, some premium brands have as much tobacco in 1 cigar as in a whole pack of cigarettes.**

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**Scientific evidence has linked cigar smoking to cancers of the:**

- Oral Cavity (lip, tongue, mouth, and throat)
- Larynx
- Lung
- Esophagus
- Pancreas

National Cancer Institute  
<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Tobacco/cigars>

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**How cigars and cigarettes differ:**

- Cigarettes are more uniform in size
- Cigars vary in size and shape and can measure more than 7 inches in length
- Cigarettes contain less than 1 gram of tobacco each
- Large cigars contain between 5 and 17 grams of tobacco
- Most cigarettes on the U.S. market take less than 10 minutes to smoke
- Large cigars can take between 1 and 2 hours to smoke

National Cancer Institute  
<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Tobacco/cigars>

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**Second Hand Smoke**

Second-hand smoke is the smoke from a burning cigarette, pipe or cigar. It is also the smoke exhaled by a smoker.



**There is *no* risk-free level of exposure to second hand smoke and "even brief amounts of exposure can cause immediate harm."**  
*(Surgeon General, 2006)*

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**What are the hazards of cigar second hand smoke?**

Second hand smoke from cigars contains the same toxins and cancer causing substances as second hand smoke from cigarettes

Some studies have found that cigars give off more second hand smoke than a cigarette because they are larger

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The National Cancer Institute Monograph on *Cigars: Health Effects and Trends* states that "the risks of tobacco smoke exposure are similar for all sources of tobacco smoke, and the magnitude of the risks experienced by cigar smokers is proportionate to the nature and intensity of their exposure."



### What are other municipalities are doing?

- None of the provinces or municipalities that have banned smoking on patios have exempted cigars.
- The BC government's *Tobacco Control Act*, which legislates indoor smoking, does not differentiate between smoking of cigarettes or cigars.



### Canadian Cancer Society Position

We support the prohibition of smoking in public places and are pleased the City of Richmond has taken action to strengthen it's tobacco restrictions.

We encourage the City of Richmond to implement a strong, model bylaw, with no exemptions for cigar smoking on patios.



### THANK-YOU

**For more information:**

Ashley Duyker  
Community Action Coordinator  
Canadian Cancer Society  
Phone: 604.215.5212  
Email: [Aduyker@bc.cancer.ca](mailto:Aduyker@bc.cancer.ca)



### Health effects of cigar use

#### Health Effects of Cigar Use

Think cigars are a safer alternative to cigarettes? Think again. According to the American Cancer Society, some premium brands have as much tobacco in 1 cigar as in a whole pack of cigarettes.

Here are some more quick facts on cigar smoking:

- A cigar is a roll of tobacco wrapped in leaf tobacco or in any substance containing tobacco. A cigarette is a roll of tobacco wrapped in paper or any substance not containing tobacco.
- Cigars come in different sizes and typically contain 5 -17 grams of tobacco – compared to about 1 gram of tobacco in a cigarette.
- The fermentation process used in cigars causes chemical and bacterial reactions that change the tobacco and give cigars a different taste and feel than cigarettes.
- While almost all cigarette smokers inhale, most cigar smokers don't. This can lead to the perception that cigar smokers are not at risk for nicotine related disease. However, cigar smokers can ingest sufficient quantities of nicotine without inhaling – and cigar smoke contains a substantial fraction of its nicotine as free nicotine, which can be readily absorbed by the membranes inside your mouth, including your gums.
- The National Cancer Institute Monograph on *Cigars: Health Effects and Trends* states that "the risks of tobacco smoke exposure are similar for all sources of tobacco smoke, and the magnitude of the risks experienced by cigar smokers is proportionate to the nature and intensity of their exposure."
- Cigars can be addictive, just like cigarettes.
- Health risks associated with cigar smoking are similar to those of cigarette smoking. These risks include: oral, esophageal, laryngeal and lung cancers and dental disease.
- Regular cigar smokers who inhale, particularly those who smoke frequently, have an increased risk of coronary heart disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.
- Mixed smokers (those who smoke both cigarettes and cigars) or those who switch to cigars from cigarettes are at the greatest risk. They're more likely to continue to inhale when they smoke cigars, therefore increasing their risk of disease.
- The environmental tobacco smoke from cigars and cigarettes contains many of the same toxins and irritants. However, due to their greater mass, cigars generate much higher levels of indoor air pollutants than cigarettes.
- Cigar tobacco has a higher concentration of nitrogen compounds (nitrates and nitrites). And, because the cigar wrapper is less porous than cigarette paper, cigar tobacco doesn't burn as completely. The result is a higher concentration of harmful nitrogen oxides.
- Cigar smoke stinks! It makes your breath, clothes and hair smell bad, and smoke from a single cigar can take 5 hours to dissipate, exposing the people around you to the lingering smell – and involuntary health risks.

#### Links:

[actnow.ca](http://www.actnow.ca)

[National Cancer Institute](#)

[Questions and Answers About Cigar Smoking and Cancer](#)