

Chemicals in Every Cigarette

Video script

The tobacco leaves have made it to harvest. At this point, they naturally contain highly addictive nicotine, and their roots have absorbed heavy metals such as lead and cadmium, which are harmful when inhaled into the body through smoke.

The leaves are dried and then cured.

During the curing process, cancer-causing chemicals called tobacco-specific nitrosamines or TSNAs form.

After curing, the leaves are shipped to the manufacturer.

When making cigarettes, the manufacturer often adds chemicals to the tobacco to control moisture, enhance flavor, and mask harshness. But some of these added chemicals also cause harm.

For example, manufacturers may add ammonia compounds, which change how easily nicotine can be absorbed into the body.

Manufacturers also may add sugars to mask harshness. These natural and added sugars can lead to the formation of acetaldehyde, a cancer-causing chemical that can make nicotine even more addictive.

When you smoke, you absorb these dangerous chemicals through your mouth and lungs.

But there's one more way to add even more toxic chemicals to a cigarette—light it.

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