

# On the line:

## As the smoke clears, the results linger...

### Hookah: Friend or foe?

Jimmie Morales  
STAFF WRITER

With its unique shape, intriguing sounds, and calming effect--its no wonder the hookah is an ever-growing and popular sensation amongst teens and many cultures around the world today.

This trend originated around 500 years to 600 years ago in the desert lands of Turkey and is also known to the lands of the Middle East and Asia.

The hookah was a past-time amongst people who would sit around conversing, listening to calm, cool music, and do tricks with the smoke. Similarly, people take part in this experience today.

However, increasingly more underage teens are partaking in smoking hookahs--which is more frowned upon than smoking cigarettes because hookahs are commonly mistaken for bong.

"Hookahs aren't as big of a deal as everyone makes of them," Hillary DeRose (08) said. "They are just flavored tobacco and you can smoke them when you're 18 anyways."

Defined as a water pipe, the hookah has many names including: Narghile, Hukah, and



PHOTO BY: TANNER YEAGER

As another alternative to normal cigarettes, teens and adults alike have fallen subject to the trend of smoking hookah with groups of friends.

shishah.

Hookahs are made up of four key parts: the base (or chamber), which is partially filled with water and ice, the bowl, where one packs tobacco (shishah) and places coal (the heating source), the pipe connects the bowl to the base and dips into the water and ice in the chamber creating an air-tight seal--lastly, the hose, which is a second tube in the

pipe that does not dip into the water but lets air in the base and allows users to inhale the shishah smoke.

Shishah and coals are the nuts and bolts to the operation. Shish is a flavored glycerin-soaked tobacco with many flavor options and coals are lit and place on top of the tin covered bowl to burn the shishah. When a smoker inhales through

the tube, a pressure difference forces air past the heating source and heats the tobacco, which gives off smoke. The smoke is pulled away from the tobacco and passes through the water and into the smoke chamber, where it is inhaled by the smoker. Hookahs come in many different shapes, sizes, hose preferences, colors, and styles--from reds to blues, one hose to six, and 12

inches to 60 inches... the possibilities are endless. Although many smokers believe that the water in the hookah filters out all the "bad stuff" in the tobacco smoke, this is not true.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) Advisory, "A typical one-hour session of hookah smoking exposes the user to 100 to 200 times the volume of smoke inhaled from a single cigarette."

"It's a person's choice to accept to the consequences for their actions--as it would be with any choice you make," said Justin Lawrence (08).

Even after passing through the water, the tobacco smoke produced still contains high levels of toxic compounds including: carbon monoxide, heavy metals and cancer-causing chemicals (carcinogens). Hookah smoking also delivers significant levels of nicotine--the very addictive substance in tobacco. Being that it is a tobacco product, one has to be at least 18-years-old to buy shishah, coals, hookahs, and any other accessories included.

Considering the surplus of detrimental effects and risks to hookah-smoking, one would question why high school students insist on partaking in such a potentially dangerous form of recreation in substitute of traditional cancer-causing cigarettes.



Shan  
D. Neal