

# Avoid the hookah and save your teeth

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Researchers say smoking a hookah is becoming increasingly trendy item in Mediterranean restaurants, cafes and bars -- but it can damage your teeth.

The researchers found water pipe smoking was largely as harmful as cigarette smoking. The prevalence of periodontal diseases was 30 percent in water pipe smokers, 24 percent in cigarette smokers and eight percent in non-smokers.

"Research from this study shows that the relative risk for periodontal disease increased by 5-fold in water pipe and 3.8-fold in cigarette smokers compared to non-smokers," said Dr. Kenneth Krebs, president of the American Academy of Periodontology. "Even though the smoke is filtered out by water, inhalation of toxic substances is similar to or even greater than that of cigarette smoking.

"Many people are mislead in believing that water filters out the toxins and that nicotine is reduced in water pipe smoking," he added. "Not only does water pipe smoking include the same substances as cigarette smoke such as carbon monoxide and tar, tobacco used for water pipe smoking contains two to four percent nicotine verses one to three percent for cigarettes."

The research appears in the Journal of Periodontology.

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