

## Cigarettes' components Handout

Match the components of the cigarettes on the left with the effect on the right.

**Nicotine ●**

**● Cancer**

**Tar ●**

**● Heart Diseases**

**Carbon Monoxide ●**

**● Addictive**

### Tar:

"Tar" is the term used to describe the toxic chemicals found in cigarettes. In solid form, tar is the brown, tacky substance that is left behind on the end of the cigarette filter. It stains a smoker's teeth and fingers brown and coats everything it touches with a brownish-yellow film. Imagine that settling into the delicate pink tissue of your lungs. Tar is present in all cigarettes and tends to increase as the cigarette is burnt down, which can mean that the last puffs of a cigarette can contain as much as twice the amount of tar as the first puffs. Tar in cigarette smoke paralyzes the cilia in the lungs, and contributes to lung diseases such as emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and lung cancer.

Smoke from a cigarette can also contain particles of tar (in gas form). When a person inhales on a lit cigarette they draw this smoke into their lungs. The smoke then condenses and about 70 percent of the tar in the smoke gets deposited in the smoker's lungs.

Cigarette filters were first added to cigarettes in the 1950s when it was reported that tar in cigarettes was associated with an increase risk of lung cancer. Using filters to stop harmful chemicals (e.g. tar and nicotine particles) from passing into the lungs was a design that was never completely effective. Now toxins can still make it through the filter and into a smoker's lungs, exposing them to the risks of smoking-related disease.

### Carbon Monoxide (CO) (car exhaust fumes)

An odorless, tasteless and poisonous gas, rapidly fatal in large amounts – it is the same gas that comes out of car exhausts and is the main gas in cigarette smoke.

### Nicotine (insecticide/addictive drug)

One of the most addictive substances known to man, a powerful and fast-acting poison. This is the chemical which causes addiction.

Resources from: Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health <http://www.smokefree.hk/>

