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12 Unexpected Nicotine Health Benefits

Dangers of smoking are common knowledge, including lung cancer, heart disease and lots of other life-threatening health conditions. As a well-known component of cigarette smoke, nicotine is often blamed for its negative effects. However, tobacco contains 7,000 different chemicals, many of which are toxic or even carcinogenic. Various studies have shown that, away from cigarettes, nicotine has many medicinal properties. For this reason, nicotine gums, patches and other products are used across the world.



What Are the Positive Effects of Nicotine?

Some established positive effects are listed below.

1. Increase Neurotransmitters

Studies have shown that the human brain contains about 86 billion neurons which depend on chemicals known as neurotransmitters to communicate between each other and to process information. Neurotransmitters help to regulate various functions within the body, including energy, sleep, libido, addictions, cravings and mood. They also control the way we learn, remember, focus and handle stress. Nicotine works by imitating acetylcholine and binding to nicotinic acetylcholine receptors to promote discharge neurotransmitters such as dopamine, serotonin, and acetylcholine which are involved in cognitive functions.

2. Have Antidepressant Properties

One of the positive effects of nicotine is antidepressant. This property is believed to work due to nicotine's ability to affect the mind when it acts on nicotinic acetylcholine receptors. This action then has an impact on neural-pathways responsible for an individual's frame of mind. Nicotine is also thought to reduce stress and improve an individual's mood. Stimulating the central nervous system, altering brain waves and increasing the levels of some neurotransmitters also play a role in the antidepressant properties. Some medics regularly prescribe nicotine as an antidepressant.

3. Possess Neuroprotective Properties

Some scientists claim that nicotine may help protect neurons from degeneration through its ability to affect stimulation of nicotinic acetylcholine receptors and reduce estrogen levels. A 2012 study indicates that nicotine has protective properties in animals' brains.

4. Treat Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia presents with cognitive problems which may be improved by use of nicotine. The result is improved memory, better learning ability and other functions. It is believed that

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many schizophrenics use nicotine to reduce the effects of the condition by improving their mental stability.

5. Manage Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Studies from the 1990s show that nicotine may help in the management of ADHD. In one study, nicotine was found to improve performance by increasing subjects' vigor. It was found to reduce reaction time and improve concentration.

6. Control Alzheimer's Disease

Researches into the ability of nicotine to enhance brain function have been going on for a long time. They follow indications that nicotine could be helpful in reducing the effects of Alzheimer's. Nicotine is believed to give encouraging results in the improvement of mental functions including attention, vigilance and recognition in persons with Alzheimer's.

7. Help in Weight and Insulin Control

If you have a weight problem, the other positive effects of nicotine may not be as important as weight control. Nicotine is said to help control weight by reducing an individual's appetite and hunger. It has also been found to improve blood sugar levels and insulin sensitivity according to studies carried out on obese mice.

8. Increase Brain Waves

Studies have shown that nicotine can affect electrical activities within the brain. When used by an individual whose brain is mainly producing beta waves – associated with stress – this individual's brain may be affected so that it produces more alpha waves, which are linked to relaxation and calmness. It has also been found that administration of nicotine through the skin causes an increase in production of alpha waves in both hemispheres of the brain as opposed to one hemisphere which is the case in people suffering from depression.

9. Manage Parkinson's Disease

There is low incidence of Parkinson's disease in smokers, which has been linked to nicotine. While little research has been conducted on this, it is thought that nicotine may have the ability to reduce the symptoms of Parkinson's disease.

10. Protect Gut

Studies have shown that nicotine prevents the occurrence of ulcerative colitis – the major cause of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). Nicotine is in fact used in some treatments for ulcerative colitis. It has also been found to help increase secretion of acid, bile and pepsin. It also aids bowel movement.

11. Repair Body Tissues

Nicotine has been found to help repair wounded body tissues. When applied topically, nicotine stimulates growth of tissues and blood capillaries within the affected areas. It increases blood flow to the wounded area and repairs the damaged blood vessels.

12. Other Benefits of Nicotine

Other positive effects of nicotine include reduced incidence of the following:

- Canker sores
- Uterine fibroids
- Vomiting during pregnancy
- Hypertension
- Endometriosis and endometrial cancer
- Thrombosis of the veins (Venous thrombosis)
- Fatal heart attacks

What Is the Safer Source of Nicotine?

Despite the positive effects, it is important to only take safe nicotine. Safer sources of nicotine include:

- **Transdermal patch** – it sticks onto the skin through which the nicotine gets into the bloodstream.
- **Gum and lozenges** – the delivery is not consistent and not so fast.
- **Inhaler and nasal spray** – it extremely quickens delivery, which has potential of addiction.