

Fact Sheet on Heat-Not-Burn Tobacco Products

What is heat-not-burn (HNB) tobacco products?

- Heat-not-burn (HNB) tobacco is a kind of tobacco products. Aerosol containing nicotine and other chemicals for users to consume is generated through an electronic device by heating up (rather than combusting) a tobacco stick with high temperature of about 350°C.
- Same as traditional cigarettes, tobacco is the main ingredient of HNB tobacco products. As such, these products contain nicotine and could be addictive.
- Since HNB tobacco is a tobacco product, selling to minors is an offense. Related legislation should be complied on sale and use.
- HNB tobacco products are being marketed as trendy and less harmful. Tobacco industry uses different names from traditional cigarettes to reduce public's awareness on their harms and attract youngsters to use.



Health risks

- Tobacco companies claim that HNB tobacco products release less toxins and are less harmful than traditional cigarettes. COSH believes such claim is a promotion tactic, which aims to downplay the health risks associated with smoking.
- DO NOT try HNB tobacco products. The long-term health effects of any tobacco products should not be underestimated, despite the limited empirical studies towards HNB tobacco products at present stage.
- According to World Health Organization (WHO), all forms of tobacco use are harmful, including HNB tobacco products. Tobacco is inherently toxic and contains carcinogens even in its natural form.
- Some of the toxins and carcinogens do not have a safety level and harm human's health.
- Currently, there is insufficient evidence to suggest that reduced exposure to these chemicals translates to reduced risk in humans, as well as on the potential health effects of secondhand smoke from HNB tobacco products.
- A European research found that HNB tobacco contain chemicals commonly found in traditional cigarettes, including nicotine, volatile organic compound (VOC), carbon monoxide (CO) and carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs)

Situation in Hong Kong

- According to the Thematic Household Survey Report No.64 published by Census and Statistics Department, there were about 5,700 daily smokers who consumed electronic smoking devices in 2017 (including e-cigarettes and HNB tobacco products), accounting to 0.9% of the daily smokers in Hong Kong.
- According to Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance (Cap 371), tobacco smoking (including HNB tobacco products) in statutory no-smoking areas is prohibited. Offenders are liable for a fixed penalty of HK\$1,500.
- In accordance with Dutiable Commodities Ordinance (Cap 109), all tobacco products are dutiable commodities. It is obliged to apply for license and permit from the Customs & Excise Department, alongside with all relevant taxes paid, before selling tobacco products in Hong Kong.

Regulations in other countries

- Regulations towards HNB tobacco products vary among countries. A number of countries regulate as tobacco products under the framework of existing tobacco control legislations.
- Some countries and regions (e.g. Singapore and Macau) implement a ban on the sale and promotion of HNB tobacco products.
- WHO recommends that HNB tobacco products should be subject to the policy and regulatory measures applied to all other tobacco products.
- To prevent the use of HNB tobacco products and the potential health risks associated with their secondhand smoke, as well as to prevent HNB products from being a gateway to youth smoking, COSH suggests to implement a ban on HNB tobacco products as soon as possible.

Published in June 2018



www.smokefree.hk

Address: Unit 4402-03, 44/F, Hopewell Centre, 183 Queen's Road East, Wanchai, Hong Kong
Telephone: +852 2838 8822
Fax: +852 2575 3966
Email: enq@cosh.org.hk