

What's Really in a Cigarette?

Essential Information

There's more than tobacco in cigarettes, other tobacco products and secondhand smoke, and many of these chemicals can also be found in everyday household products. Create a display to showcase these ingredients and expose the public to the truth.

Age group:	any age
Number of Participants:	It only takes one, but the more the merrier!
Time:	preparation - a few weeks in advance activity - 2 to 4 hours
Resources:	As many household items as you can find (5 to 15 items). See below.
Cost:	If you can't find any of the ingredients, you may want to buy them. Spend no more than \$20.

Background: Most products have a list of ingredients somewhere on the label. Ever wonder why there isn't a list of ingredients on a pack of cigarettes? If there were, it would be a really long list! There are more than 4,000 chemicals in a single cigarette, 69 of which are known carcinogens (they cause cancer)! No wonder Big Tobacco is ashamed to show what they put in their products. If customers knew the kinds of things they were inhaling everyday, they probably wouldn't smoke anymore. It's time to expose the truth behind the ingredients in cigarette smoke!

- **Arsenic:** used in rat poison
- **Acetic Acid:** found in **vinegar, hair dye, photo developing fluid**
- **Acetone:** main ingredient in **paint thinner** and **finger nail polish remover**
- **Ammonia:** a typical household **cleaning fluid**
- **Benzene:** found in **rubber cement**
- **Butane:** **cigarette lighter fluid**
- **Cadmium:** found in **batteries** and artist's **oil paints**
- **Carbon Monoxide:** a **poisonous gas** found in **car exhaust**, as well as from other sources
- **DDT/Dieldrin:** **Insecticides**
- **Formaldehyde:** used to embalm dead bodies. This **embalming fluid** is often used to preserve small animals in biology classes, so check with your science teacher to find this one.
- **Hexamine:** in **barbecue lighter fluid**
- **Hydrazine:** used in **jet and rocket fuels**
- **Hydrogen Cyanide:** used as a **poison in gas chambers**
- **Lead:** a highly **poisonous metal** that used to be found in some paints
- **Napthalenes:** used in **explosives, moth balls, and paint pigments**
- **Nitrobenzene:** a gasoline additive
- **Phenol:** used in **disinfectants and plastics**
- **Polonium-210:** a highly **radioactive** element
- **Stearic acid:** found in **candle wax**
- **Toluene:** found in **embalmer's glue**

activities

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So, now that you know all the nasty things mixed into cigarettes, spit tobacco and secondhand smoke, what can you do? Tell everyone else!

3 to 4 weeks before KBD:

- ✦ Reserve a spot in a community event or schedule a presentation in class or at a school assembly to showcase your display (local festival, county fair, school health day, etc.)

1 week prior:

- ✦ Recruit volunteers to help gather supplies for the display and participate in the activity.
- ✦ Study the list of ingredients in the KBD guide and notice the household products that include these ingredients. Search for these products in your house, and make sure it is okay to use them in your activity. Keep in mind that it can be an empty container that once contained these ingredients. If you cannot find enough products in your house, ask a neighbor or friend if you can borrow some of them for the activity. If supplies still cannot be found, buy a few at the local hardware or grocery store.
- ✦ Make sure you keep these products tightly sealed at all times. After the event return them to where you borrowed them.

Kick Butts Day!

- ✦ Present to your audience, or if you are at a health fair or similar event, set the products on a table with a list of other ingredients that can be found in cigarettes.
- ✦ Be prepared to answer questions and back up your research.
- ✦ Point out that the label on many of these products has a distinct warning that advises emergency assistance if the product somehow enters the body. Isn't it odd that these poisonous ingredients are inhaled by smokers and those exposed to secondhand smoke everyday?

Other ideas:

- ✦ Take it to the streets. See the "Raid the Streets" activity on page 64. If these ingredients are shocking to you, others will think so, too. Design a flyer, posters, factsheets and spread the word.
- ✦ Put flyers up around your school or hand them out at an assembly or sports game. Head to other local hang outs and events and let people know what Big Tobacco has been trying to hide.
- ✦ Tobacco ingredient collection competition. Instead of doing a presentation, ask your entire school or group to get involved. Have everyone bring in as many of these products as they can (have them label them with their names so you can return them after the event.) Each class can compete to collect the most ingredients. Collect as many of each household product as possible and get permission to display the items in the main hallway of your school, in the school parking lot or at another highly visible location. Just imagine huge piles or bins full of each of the household products listed above – this will create an even harder-hitting visual than a classroom presentation. Remember to keep all products tightly sealed in their original packaging. Have

