

What is Nic Sick?

I recently became aware of a new teenage trend known as “Nic Sick.” Nic Sick has previously been known as Nicotine Poisoning. Unfortunately, now kids see Nic Sick or Nicotine Poisoning as a method of getting high. They often interpret the initial feelings of elevated heart rates and blood pressures accompanied by dizziness as feelings of euphoria. The onset of symptoms is rapid (see below.)

What is Nic Sick?

After oral ingestion of nicotine, signs and symptoms of nicotine poisoning mimic those for nerve agent or organophosphate poisoning. (1)

Some of the symptoms of Nic Sick?

There are a number of symptoms you want to watch for if you are worried about a possible nicotine overdose. Within the first 15 minutes to an hour of being exposed, symptoms would create a stimulating effect such as:

- Nausea or vomiting
- Stomachache and loss of appetite
- Increased heart rate and blood pressure
- Headache
- Mouth watering
- Quick, heavy breathing
- Dizziness or tremors
- Confusion and anxiety

Within 30 minutes to up to four hours later, symptoms shift and include:

- Diarrhea
- Shallow breathing

- Slower heartbeat and blood pressure
- Extreme fatigue
- Weakness, slow reflexes, or unable to control muscles
- Pale skin

These symptoms progress to include seizures, respiratory failure, cardiac arrest, breathing difficulties or even coma! (2)

Lethal Nicotine Levels and Methods of Consumption

The fatal human dose has been estimated to be about 50–60 mg for a 150-160 lb. human being. (3) It is estimated that a smoker would absorb roughly 1mg of nicotine per cigarette. Based on these numbers, poisoning would occur at 2.5-3 packs of cigarettes, presumably over a very short period. (4)

That's a lot of chain smoking, which is why nicotine poisoning is so rare.

Nicotine consumed via gum and oral liquids, such as the e-cigarette liquids are the most likely sources of nicotine poisoning in adults.

Toddlers and child can be poisoned by eating cigarettes.

(1) Case Definition Nicotine: Centers for Disease Control

<https://emergency.cdc.gov/agent/nicotine/casedef.asp>

(2) Editorial Staff, "What it Means to be Nic Sick!" American Lung Association,

<https://www.lung.org/about-us/blog/2019/10/nic-sick.html>

(3) Leonard, Jane, "Can You Overdose on Too much Nicotine?" Medical News Today <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/319627>

(4) "Nic Sick-What Is It?, Alpha Lifestyle Center,

<https://www.alphalaserinfo.com/nic-sick-what-is-it/>

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2/28/2020

Symptoms of nicotine poisoning

