Get the Facts on Kreteks...Are clove cigarettes less harmful to smoke?

Kreteks are often referred to as clove cigarettes and are imported from Indonesia and typically contain a mixture of tobacco, cloves and other additives.

Very little research on the long-term health effects of kreteks has been done in the United States; however, research in Indonesia indicates that kretek smoking is associated with lung problems.

Important facts to know:

- Kretek smoking is associated with an increased risk for acute lung injury (i.e., lung damage that can include a range of characteristics such as decreased oxygen, fluid in the lungs, leakage from capillaries, and inflammation), especially among susceptible individuals with asthma or respiratory infections.

- Regular kretek smokers have 13 to 20 times the risk for abnormal lung function (e.g., airflow obstruction or reduced oxygen absorption) compared with nonsmokers.

Smoking clove cigarettes can lead to severe health consequences; the following health problems have been associated with clove cigarettes:

- Bronchitis
- Difficulty breathing
- Hemoptysis (i.e., coughing up blood)
- Pneumonia
- Respiratory infection

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