

# Chemical Soup

## What's really in a cigarette?

### What's really in a cigarette and why...

- **Sugar, liquorice and vanilla extract** are added to cigarettes to make them more appealing to young people and to make them taste better. Nicotine tastes hot and peppery so tobacco companies need to disguise the taste.
- **Cocoa and peppermints, bleach, anti-freeze and cat pee.** Nicotine is the addictive part of the cigarette but not the most harmful. Tobacco companies need to make sure the nicotine hits your brain as quickly as possible to feed your addiction. Adding cocoa and methanol (found in mint) to cigarettes widens your airways, a bit like a throat lozenge. This means that the smoke can get further into your lungs and expand the surface area for absorbing nicotine. Adding a chemical ammonia, commonly found in household cleaners such as bleach and anti-freeze (used to keep your car running in winter) – and also in cat pee - makes it easier for the nicotine to reach your brain.
- **Vinegar, lighter fuel, nail varnish remover, paint stripper, shreds of plastic bags, some old batteries and some poo.** Tobacco companies want cigarettes to burn at the correct rate. Fast enough for you to buy plenty but slow enough for you to get addicted. They add chemicals to make this happen. In this mixture, vinegar represents acetic acid which is added to make cigarettes burn, along with the butane, contained in lighter fuel, ethylene found in plastic bags, acetone in nail varnish remover and petroleum in paint stripper. A chemical called cadmium, which is found in batteries is also added. This will pass through your lungs into your body. The poo gives off methane gas. Methane is added to cigarettes to make them burn.
- **Rat poison, ant killer and fertiliser.** Tobacco companies want tobacco plants to grow well, produce plenty of tobacco leaves and remain free from diseases and pests. To do this they add rat poison (which contains arsenic), ant killer and some fertiliser to make it all grow nicely.
- In total, there are over 4000 chemicals found in every single cigarette, 69 of which are known to cause cancer. Some chemicals are added through the production process, such as pesticides and fertilisers and many are added with the aim of selling more and keeping people addicted.
- The 3 main reasons chemicals are added are to make cigarettes taste better, make them burn better and get people addicted more easily. Every time you pick up a cigarette this is what you are putting in your body along with the other 4000 chemicals. Tobacco companies know this.