

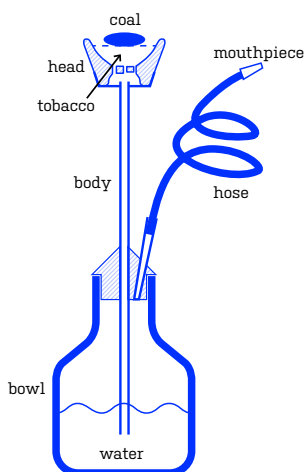


Waterpipe Fact Sheet

September 2020

What is a waterpipe?

A waterpipe is an object with a base shaped like a bottle or a bowl that is used to smoke plain or flavored tobacco. It has at least one long pipe that smokers use to inhale the smoke up through a liquid, usually water.



* **World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)**
In force since 2005, the WHO FCTC is the first international treaty negotiated under the auspices of the WHO. The treaty is aimed at reducing the demand and supply of tobacco.

Other common names for waterpipe

- Argilah
- Goza
- Hookah
- Hubble-bubble
- Narghileh
- Shisha

Q: Is it safe?

A: **No.**

- It is addictive.
- The smoke is toxic and carcinogenic.
- It can potentially spread diseases.
- It has other harmful health effects.
- Second-hand smoke can harm others.

Popularity

The origin of waterpipe is unclear. In the late 19th century, it was popular among older men in the Middle East. Since the early 1990s and the availability of flavored tobacco, it has become increasingly popular, particularly with young people.

In 2018, the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)* in its [Global Progress Report](#), estimated that waterpipe was available in 69% of countries, up from 61% in 2016.

The five key reasons it is growing in popularity are:

- Flavored tobacco
- Social acceptance in cafés and restaurants
- Promotion via mass and social media
- Lack of policies and regulations specific to waterpipe
- Misconceptions about its safety

Snapshot by region

The Americas

In the United States, a national study of 104,434 university students showed that waterpipe was the most popular form of smoking after cigarettes; almost one in three has used it at least once.

Europe

Among people aged 15 years or over, around one in six has tried waterpipe at least once, with around four in 10 using it in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

Western Pacific

Here, waterpipe is called a “bong.” It is different in design from the Middle Eastern waterpipe and, therefore, often not included in waterpipe studies.

Eastern Mediterranean

This region has the highest use of waterpipe. Various studies suggest it is more common than cigarette smoking among 13-15-year-olds in most countries in the region.

Africa

One in five poor high school students in South Africa uses waterpipe daily.

Southeast Asia

“Hookah” bars and restaurants are becoming increasingly common and most often frequented by young people.

Role of the tobacco industry

Waterpipe has become an integral part of the global tobacco market since Japan Tobacco International (JTI) acquired Al Nakhla in Egypt in 2012. At the time, Al Nakhla was the world’s largest waterpipe tobacco manufacturer. In 2019, Philip Morris Products in South Africa filed two patents for electronic waterpipe.

Tobacco companies producing waterpipe

Due to weak regulations and a lack of transparency by the tobacco industry, it is difficult to identify all brands of waterpipe and the companies that own them. The table below shows some brands of waterpipe by country of production. However, little information is available on the ownership, management or the market size of each of them.

Country of production	Brand
Egypt	Al Nakhla (owned by JTI) Eastern Tobacco: (Maasel, Saloum, Crystal) produced by Eastern Company
Germany	187 Tobacco Aeon Al Wazir Tobacco Anonymous Tobacco-Vendetta Babos Tobacco Black Tobacco ³⁴ Capital Bra Smoke Chaos Tobacco Colonial Tobacco Escobar Tobacco Fibdis Tabak Gama Tobacco Gentleman Smoke Golden Pipe Tobacco Hero Smoke Holster Tobacco Infinity Molasses Lady Smoke Magic Smoke Maridan Tobacco Moloko Tobacco Mytabak NameLess Tobacco Nargilem Tabak Nubia Tobacco Octo Buzz Tobacco Oneway Tabak Rocket Star Rozana Tobacco Shiazio Sinned Tobacco Smokeys Tabak Tombacco Zeynep sein Tabak
Iran	Al Mahmood
India	Afzal Jannet El Fawakeh & Sophie's (produced by MujeebSons) Originals (produced by Godfrey Phillips India)
Indonesia	Produced by Doobacco: Awards Tabak & Dobacco Gastro O's Tobacco
Jordan	360 Tobacco 7 Nights Al Rayan Hookah (Alandalus flavoured tobacco & Molassese Co. L.L.C) Al Tawareg Tobacco Al Waha (Middle East for Tobacco) Amy Gold Dark Smoke Mazaya (owned by Alzawrae Company) Romman Skull Tobacco Starbuzz Tobacco Sweet Smoke
Paraguay	Zomo
Russia	Darkside
Turkey	Serbetli Smyrna Tobacco
UAE	Al Ajamy Gold Al Fakhamah Al Fakher (owned by Jordanian Al Eqbal Investment Company) Al Safwa
UK	Savacco
USA	360 Tobacco (packaging) Alchemist Tobacco Azure Cloud Tobacco Eternal Smoke Fantasia Fumari Headquarters Hookah Haze Tobacco Hookafina Nirvana Othmani Pure Tobacco ROR Tobacco Social Smoke Starbuzz Tobacco Tangiers Trifecta Tobacco Ugly Hookah Xracher Tobacco Zumerret Stating to be tobacco free: Beamer Hookahpsule Hydro Herbal Urth tree

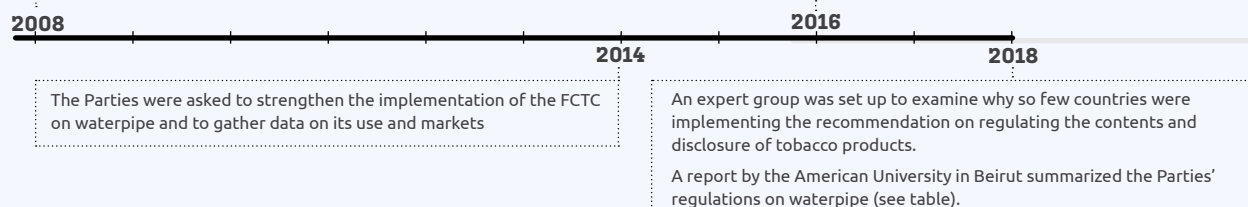
In addition to tobacco companies, other companies are involved in the waterpipe industry, including those that produce the devices, charcoal and accessories. For the most up-to-date list of these companies, see www.tobaccotactics.org/wiki/waterpipe.

Regulation

The WHO FCTC identifies tobacco products as “products entirely or partly made of the leaf tobacco as raw material which are manufactured to be used for smoking, sucking, chewing or snuffing.” This definition covers waterpipe.

Parties to the FCTC were asked to introduce health warnings and messages on waterpipe.

Parties were given more detailed instructions, including on banning flavors.
The American University in Beirut was made the global knowledge hub for waterpipe smoking.



Country	Smoke Free Policies	Text Warning Label	Pictorial Warning Label	Waterpipe Specific Health Warnings
African region				
Ghana	Yes	Yes	No	No
Kenya	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Nigeria	Yes	Yes	No	No
Rwanda	Yes	Yes	No	No
Uganda	Yes	Yes	No	No
United Republic of Tanzania	Yes	Yes	No	No
Region of the Americas				
Belize	No	Yes	No	No
Brazil	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Canada	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Colombia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jamaica	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Panama	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
United States of America	Yes	Yes	No	No
Eastern Mediterranean Region				
Afghanistan	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Bahrain	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Egypt	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lebanon	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Pakistan	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Saudi Arabia	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
United Arab Emirates	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Country	Smoke Free Policies	Text Warning Label	Pictorial Warning Label	Waterpipe Specific Health Warnings
European Region				
Azerbaijan	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Bulgaria	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Czech Republic	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Estonia	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Israel	Yes	Yes	No	No
Germany	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Netherlands	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Norway	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Portugal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Russian Federation	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Serbia	Yes	Yes	No	No
Slovakia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Slovenia	Yes	Yes	No	No
Turkey	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ukraine	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
United Kingdom	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
South-East Asia Region				
India	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Western Pacific Region				
Japan	Yes	Yes	No	No
Philippines	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Republic of Korea	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

The impact of COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, some countries temporarily banned the use of waterpipe to try to stop the spread of the infection. These included Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia and UAE.

However, the Maldives has seen an increase specifically linked to tourists and, during lockdown, services started to deliver waterpipes to homes via mopeds.

The WHO warned that: “Since waterpipe smoking is typically an activity that takes place within groups in public settings and waterpipe use increases the risk of transmission of diseases, it could also encourage the transmission of COVID-19 in social gatherings.”



Acknowledgements and Authorship

This brief was prepared based on the Tobacco Tactics page on waterpipe, written by Raouf Alebshehy with additional input from Karin Silver and Dara O'Hare, all from the Tobacco Control Research Group at the University of Bath.

Stopping Tobacco Organizations and Products (STOP) is a global tobacco industry watchdog whose mission is to expose the tobacco industry strategies and tactics that undermine public health. STOP is funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies (www.bloomberg.org) and is a partnership between The Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control, The Tobacco Control Research Group at the University of Bath, International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease and Vital Strategies. This brief was prepared for STOP by The Tobacco Control Research Group at the University of Bath.