

# wellness wednesday

## Butt ... it's litter too!

When people talk about cigarettes they usually think about the detrimental effects that they cause to themselves or to the other people around them, but there is another factor that most people do not consider...trash.

While being toxic to the human body, cigarettes are also toxic to the environment. For instance: 95% of cigarette filters are made from cellulose acetate, a compound known to degrade very slowly in the environment.

- Harmful chemicals in cigarettes become trapped by the filters and can be absorbed into soil if they are thrown on the ground.
- Studies have shown that some animals even ingest cigarette butts, mistaking them for food.
- Burning filters have been known to cause small fires and have been attributed to some major fires too.

Even the process of making cigarettes is harmful to the environment. Approximately one tree is cut down to make around 300 cigarettes (roughly a two-week supply of cigarettes for a pack-a-day smoker), so if someone smokes for just 10 years, that is 260 trees lost by just one person!

Over 70% of land used in tobacco production is in developing countries where they actually

need to import their food because most of their land is used for growing tobacco.

In general, tobacco farms use a lot more pesticides and herbicides in order to obtain more crops. All of these chemicals leech into the ground soil and water, and destroy the productiveness of the soil for future use.

As a whole, cigarettes are also considered the most littered item in the world. On our campus alone, it has been shown that students of the Clean Air Project collected over 18,000 cigarette butts around campus in one academic year. UO facilities estimated that it costs \$8,000 to \$10,000 per year, or a minimum of 200 hours, to clean up cigarette butts.

So what can you do to help with these issues?

- Plant a tree. There are plenty of groups in Eugene that are involved with planting new trees around the area that anyone can be apart of.
- Stop giving your money to the tobacco industry that causes these environmental problems by stopping smoking...you save the environment and some money in the process!
- Advocate for a Smoke-Free Policy to ensure our campus does not have to see anymore cigarette litter.

From this evidence, it can be concluded that smoking cigarettes is not just a health issue but also an environmental and even social/economic issue. From the beginning of the production process to the litter it produces, cigarettes do not contribute anything that can be remotely seen as beneficial to the environment and the world as a whole.

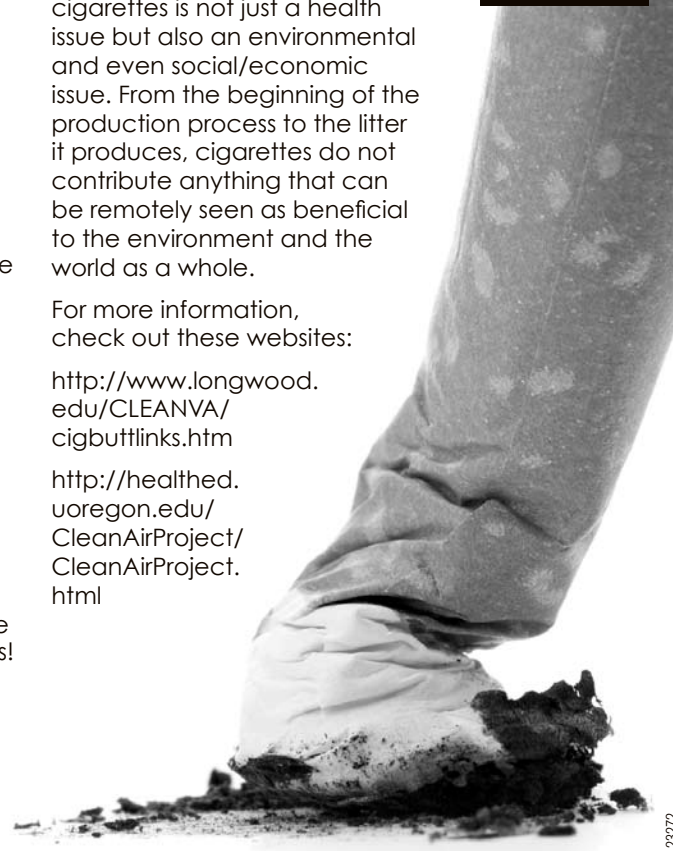
For more information, check out these websites:

<http://www.longwood.edu/CLEANVA/cigbutlinks.htm>

<http://healthed.uoregon.edu/CleanAirProject/CleanAirProject.html>



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### Hours:

M - F, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Sat, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Located on the corner of 13th & Agate. For appointments or After-Hours Nurse Advice Line, call (541) 346-2770. Please see <http://healthcenter.uoregon.edu> for After-Hours Care Options during Health Center closures.



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