

“I only smoke socially, am I still at risk?”

You can still become addicted to nicotine even when smoking at low levels. Addiction aside, smoking just one to four cigarettes a day still almost triples your risk of dying from heart disease or lung cancer so there really is no safe amount of smoking.

“I know someone who smoked their whole life and never got cancer.”

Decades of research has proven smoking causes cancer, but this doesn't mean every person who smokes will get cancer and every person who doesn't smoke will remain cancer-free. Smokers are more likely to get cancer than non-smokers, and their risk of many other negative health effects is also increased.

“It's too late for me, the damage is done.”

Long term smokers may feel that it's too late to quit. However, stopping smoking has major and immediate health benefits for men and women of any age – even for those who already have a smoking-related illness.

Quitting smoking.

No matter how long you have smoked, quitting will benefit your health now and into the future, benefit your family and friends and save you money. Not everyone quits smoking the same way. You need to find out what quitting method is best for you.

Some people find it useful to ask for help while others prefer to do it on their own.



© Cancer Council NSW
Reproduced with permission

Help can come in different forms and you should choose what works for you:

- Call the **Quitline** on 13 7848 to speak to a trained counsellor
- Visit www.quitcoach.org.au for an online support service
- Talk to your **doctor** or **pharmacist** about ways you can quit
- Visit makesmokinghistory.org.au for more information

How do we know?

Information in this brochure is from the following references:

- Cancer Research UK. (2012) Smoking and Cancer.
- Make Smoking History. (2014) Tobacco and Cancer fact sheet.
- Make Smoking History. (2014) Statistics on Smoking fact sheet.
- Make Smoking History. (2014) Challenge Your Excuses to Smoke fact sheet.
- Quit Victoria. (2014) Diseases related to secondhand smoke.
- Tobacco in Australia. (2014) Health and other benefits of quitting.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2014) The Health Consequences of Smoking – 50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General, Executive Summary.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2010) 2010 Surgeon General's Report – How Tobacco Smoke Causes Disease Fact Sheet.

Funds to create this brochure were donated to Cancer Council WA by Angus Faed, in memory of his beloved late wife Toni, who was affected by cancer, emphysema, and other smoking related health issues.



To access any of our services, programs or information about cancer, call one of our Cancer Nurses on 13 11 20. This is a confidential service, available Statewide for the cost of a local call Monday to Friday 8 am – 6 pm.



Tobacco and cancer



Reduce your risk of cancer

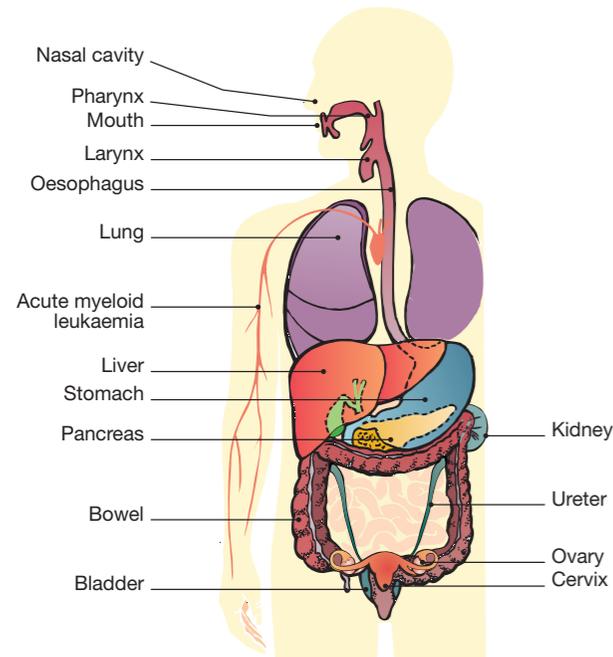
Smoking increases your risk of cancer

Tobacco smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, including 69 chemicals known to cause cancer (carcinogens). When you breathe in – or inhale – cigarette smoke, these chemicals enter your lungs and spread through your body. Most smokers are addicted to nicotine, one of the main chemicals in tobacco smoke.

Lung cancer was the first major disease to be linked to cigarette smoking in the 1950s and 1960s. Since that time, the list of diseases caused by smoking has grown to include many cancers in different parts of the body including cancer of the lung, mouth (oral cavity), throat (pharynx), oesophagus, stomach, bowel, liver, pancreas, nasal cavity and sinuses, voice box (larynx), cervix, ovary, bladder, kidney, ureter and bone marrow (myeloid leukaemia).

Tobacco smoking is the most common cause of cancer and is responsible for almost 1 in every 5 cancer deaths.

The 16 cancers caused by smoking



Other negative effects of tobacco

Tobacco use harms nearly every organ of the body. It is known to cause cancer, cardiovascular (heart) disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), respiratory diseases, peripheral vascular disease, and many other disabling and potentially fatal conditions.

Secondhand smoke

It is well known that secondhand smoke is also a serious risk to health and there is no safe level of exposure. Secondhand smoke can cause heart disease and lung cancer in non-smokers. It also causes many other diseases and conditions in

children and infants such as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), bronchitis and pneumonia.

Smoking and pregnancy

Smoking while pregnant can cause difficulties and complications during the pregnancy, at childbirth and into childhood. Smoking is associated with a higher risk of miscarriage, premature birth, stillborn or low birth-weight babies and, in some cases, SIDS. Smoking while pregnant can also cause a baby to be born with weaker lungs, a weaker immune system or cleft lip, as well as experience weight problems or become overweight/ obese in childhood. If you are pregnant and you smoke you should quit, and the sooner the better. The longer you continue to smoke

during your pregnancy, the more harm you are causing your baby.

Smoking and alcohol

The combined effects of smoking and drinking alcohol are much greater than the individual risks from either smoking or drinking alcohol alone. This is because alcohol makes it easier for the mouth and throat to absorb the cancer-causing chemicals in tobacco. People who drink alcohol and smoke cigarettes have a much higher chance of getting head and neck cancers (cancer of the mouth, pharynx, larynx and oesophagus). In fact, the combination of drinking and smoking is thought to be responsible for more than 3 in every 4 cancers of the upper airway and digestive tract.

Benefits of quitting smoking

Within 20 minutes after the last cigarette:

- Blood pressure drops to normal
- Pulse rate drops to normal
- Body temperature of hands and feet increases to normal

Within 24 hours:

- Chance of heart attack begins to decrease

Within ½ to 3 months:

- Circulation improves
- Walking becomes easier
- Lung function increases up to 30%

Within 1 year:

- Excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker

Within 10 years:

- Lung cancer death rate is similar to that of non-smokers
- Precancerous cells are replaced by healthy cells
- Risk of other cancers decreases

Within 8 hours:

- Carbon monoxide level in blood drops to normal
- Oxygen level in blood increases to normal

Within 48 hours:

- Nerve endings start to regrow
- Ability to smell and taste is enhanced

Within 1 to 9 months:

- Coughing, sinus congestion and shortness of breath all decrease
- Cilia (small hair-like structures) regrow in the lungs, increasing ability to clean the lungs
- The body's overall energy increases

Within 5 years:

- Lung cancer death rate decreases by almost half
- Stroke risk is reduced to that of a non-smoker 5-15 years after quitting

Within 15 years:

- Risk of coronary heart disease is similar to that of a non-smoker