



## The World Health Organisation describes smoking as ‘the single greatest cause of preventable disease in the developed world.’

Tobacco smoking is a leading cause of preventable death and illness in Australia. Smoking causes approximately 15,500 deaths in Australia each year. One in two lifetime smokers will die from smoking, and many of these deaths occur in middle age.

Tobacco smoke contains over 4000 toxic chemicals, at least 69 of which are known to cause cancer. Many of the chemicals in tobacco smoke cause serious damage to your health.

You do not have to be a smoker to be affected by cigarette smoke. Exposing others to the dangerous chemicals that are found in tobacco smoke via second-hand smoke can cause serious health problems. There is no safe level of exposure to second-hand smoke.

It is not just health that smoking harms. It can increase risk of house fires, contribute to financial strain and have a negative impact on the environment.

### Reducing cancer risk

Quitting smoking will greatly reduce your cancer risk, even if you have been a long term smoker. Within 72 hours of quitting, benefits and improvements to your health have already begun. After 10 to 15 years, your risk of death from smoking-related causes will be close to that of someone who has never smoked.

## What are the health problems?

### Lung cancer

Lung cancer is the most common cause of cancer death in Queensland, for both men and



women. The majority of lung cancer cases are caused by smoking.

### Mouth and throat cancer

The organs associated with the respiratory system are all affected by tobacco smoke. Smoking is a major cause of oral cancer including tumours of the cheek, gum, tongue, lip and the floor and lining of the mouth.

Research also shows that smoking contributes to a range of other cancers including colon, stomach, pancreas, kidney, cervical, penis, bladder and leukaemia.

### Cardiovascular disease

Smoking is a major cause of heart attack, stroke, peripheral arterial disease and abdominal aortic aneurysms, all of which are types of cardiovascular disease. There is now strong evidence that exposure to second-hand cigarette smoke is also a cause of heart disease in non-smokers.

# Harms of smoking

## Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a long-term lung disease that causes shortness of breath. Over 70 per cent of deaths from COPD are due to smoking. COPD commonly occurs because of the destruction of lung tissue otherwise known as emphysema.

## Emphysema

Smoking causes the air sacs in the lungs to progressively lose their flexibility and break down, making it harder to breathe. Emphysema or 'lung rot', cannot be reversed.

## Bronchitis

Bronchitis occurs when the breathing tubes become narrowed and congested with excess mucus. This reduces the amount of air that can be breathed in and out. Bronchitis gives a person a smoker's cough and it also lowers resistance to other diseases such as pneumonia. Smokers are twice as likely to have bronchitis than non-smokers.

## Smoking can also lead to:

- Premature ageing of the skin.
- Periodontal disease, yellowing teeth, decay and reduced blood flow to gums.
- Cataracts and macular degeneration (a common cause of blindness).
- Poor circulation, which increases the risk of gangrene and amputation.

## Information for women

There are many negative smoking side effects specific to women. These include:

- Menstrual problems such as severe period pain and premenstrual tension
- Increased risk of giving birth to a baby of low birth weight
- Increased risk of miscarriage, premature labour and birth complications
- Exposing an unborn child to the toxic chemicals found in cigarettes
- Increased risk of a baby dying from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Earlier, more severe menopause
- Osteoporosis

## Information for men

There are many negative smoking side effects specific to men. These include:

- Increased likelihood of sperm abnormality and lower sperm count in men
- Narrowing of blood vessels to the penis causing impotence.

## How to quit

**Call Quitline 13 QUIT (13 7848)** for free information, practical assistance and support.

**Discuss quitting smoking with a health professional** and plan your quitting strategy together.

**Consider using pharmacotherapy** such as Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT), Bupropion Hcl or Varenicline.

**Disclaimer:** The information in this publication should not be used as a substitute for advice from a properly qualified medical professional who can advise you about your own individual medical needs. It is not intended to constitute medical advice and is provided for general information purposes only. Information on cancer, including the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of cancer, is constantly being updated and revised by medical professionals and the research community.

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