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SEARCH

Health Effects of Cigarette Smoking



Cigarette smoking harms nearly every organ of the body, causes many diseases, and reduces the health of smokers in general.^{1,2}

Quitting smoking lowers your risk for smoking-related diseases and can add years to your life.^{1,2}

Smoking and Death

Cigarette smoking is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States.¹

On This Page

- [Smoking and Death](#)
- [Smoking and Increased Health Risks](#)
- [Smoking and Cardiovascular Disease](#)
- [Smoking and Respiratory Disease](#)
- [Smoking and Cancer](#)
- [Smoking and Other Health Risks](#)
- [Quitting and Reduced Risks](#)
- [References](#)

- Cigarette smoking causes more than 480,000 deaths each year in the United States. This is nearly one in five deaths.^{1,2,3}
- Smoking causes more deaths each year than the following causes combined:⁴
 - Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
 - Illegal drug use
 - Alcohol use
 - Motor vehicle injuries
 - Firearm-related incidents
- More than 10 times as many U.S. citizens have died prematurely from cigarette smoking than have died in all the wars fought by the United States.¹
- Smoking causes about 90% (or 9 out of 10) of all lung cancer deaths.^{1,2} More women die from lung cancer each year than from breast cancer.⁵
- Smoking causes about 80% (or 8 out of 10) of all deaths from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).¹
- Cigarette smoking increases risk for death from all causes in men and women.¹
- The risk of dying from cigarette smoking has increased over the last 50 years in the U.S.¹

Smoking and Increased Health Risks

Smokers are more likely than nonsmokers to develop heart disease, stroke, and lung cancer.¹

- Estimates show smoking increases the risk:
 - For coronary heart disease by 2 to 4 times^{1,6}
 - For stroke by 2 to 4 times¹
 - Of men developing lung cancer by 25 times¹
 - Of women developing lung cancer by 25.7 times¹
- Smoking causes diminished overall health, increased absenteeism from work, and increased health care utilization and cost.¹

Smoking and Cardiovascular Disease

Smokers are at greater risk for diseases that affect the heart and blood vessels (cardiovascular disease).^{1,2}

- Smoking causes stroke and coronary heart disease, which are among the leading causes of death in the United States.^{1,3}
- Even people who smoke fewer than five cigarettes a day can have early signs of cardiovascular disease.¹
- Smoking damages blood vessels and can make them thicken and grow narrower. This makes your heart beat faster and your blood pressure go up. Clots can also form.^{1,2}
- A stroke occurs when:
 - A clot blocks the blood flow to part of your brain;
 - A blood vessel in or around your brain bursts.^{1,2}
- Blockages caused by smoking can also reduce blood flow to your legs and skin.^{1,2}

Smoking and Respiratory Disease

Smoking can cause lung disease by damaging your airways and the small air sacs (alveoli) found in your lungs.^{1,2}

- Lung diseases caused by smoking include COPD, which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis.^{1,2}
- Cigarette smoking causes most cases of lung cancer.^{1,2}
- If you have asthma, tobacco smoke can trigger an attack or make an attack worse.^{1,2}
- Smokers are 12 to 13 times more likely to die from COPD than nonsmokers.¹

Smoking and Cancer

Smoking can cause cancer almost anywhere in your body:^{1,2}

(See figure above)

- Bladder
- Blood (acute myeloid leukemia)
- Cervix



[Larger infographic](#)

- Colon and rectum (colorectal)
- Esophagus
- Kidney and ureter
- Larynx
- Liver
- Oropharynx (includes parts of the throat, tongue, soft palate, and the tonsils)
- Pancreas
- Stomach
- Trachea, bronchus, and lung

Smoking also increases the risk of dying from cancer and other diseases in cancer patients and survivors.¹

If nobody smoked, one of every three cancer deaths in the United States would not happen.^{1,2}

Smoking and Other Health Risks

Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body and affects a person's overall health.^{1,2}

- Smoking can make it harder for a woman to become pregnant. It can also affect her baby's health before and after birth. Smoking increases risks for:^{1,2,5}
 - Preterm (early) delivery
 - Stillbirth (death of the baby before birth)
 - Low birth weight
 - Sudden infant death syndrome (known as SIDS or crib death)
 - Ectopic pregnancy
 - Orofacial clefts in infants
- Smoking can also affect men's sperm, which can reduce fertility and also increase risks for birth defects and miscarriage.²
- Smoking can affect bone health.^{1,5}
 - Women past childbearing years who smoke have weaker bones than women who never smoked. They are also at greater risk for broken bones.
- Smoking affects the health of your teeth and gums and can cause tooth loss.¹
- Smoking can increase your risk for cataracts (clouding of the eye's lens that makes it hard for you to see). It can also cause age-related macular degeneration (AMD). AMD is damage to a small spot near the center of the retina, the part of the eye needed for central vision.¹
- Smoking is a cause of type 2 diabetes mellitus and can make it harder to control. The risk of developing diabetes is 30–40% higher for active smokers than nonsmokers.^{1,2}
- Smoking causes general adverse effects on the body, including inflammation and decreased immune function.¹
- Smoking is a cause of rheumatoid arthritis.¹

Quitting and Reduced Risks

- Quitting smoking cuts cardiovascular risks. Just 1 year after quitting smoking, your risk for a heart attack drops sharply.²
- Within 2 to 5 years after quitting smoking, your risk for stroke may reduce to about that of a nonsmoker's.²
- If you quit smoking, your risks for cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus, and bladder drop by half within 5 years.²
- Ten years after you quit smoking, your risk for lung cancer drops by half.²

References

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. [The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General](#). Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014 [accessed 2017 Apr 20].
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For Further Information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

Office on Smoking and Health

E-mail: tobaccoinfo@cdc.gov

Phone: 1-800-CDC-INFO

Media Inquiries: Contact CDC's Office on Smoking and Health press line at 770-488-5493.

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1600 Clifton Road Atlanta, GA 30329-4027 USA
800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636), TTY: 888-232-6348
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