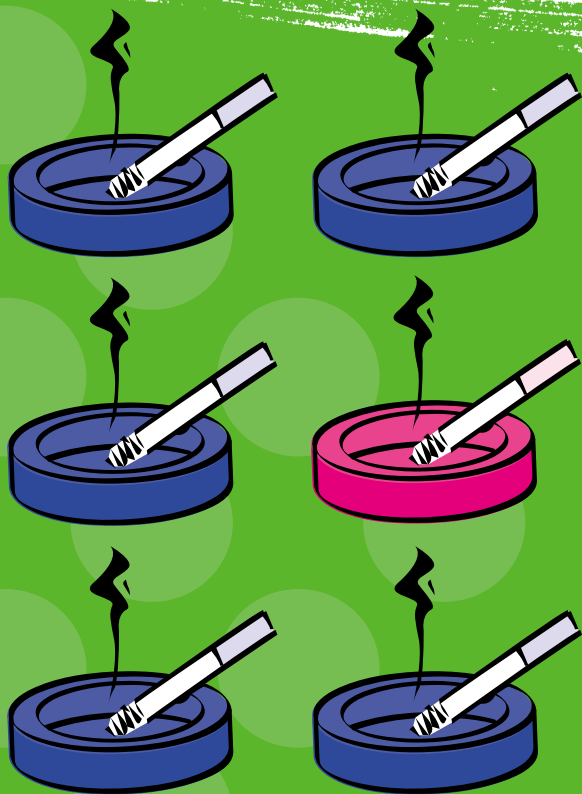


smoking & cancer

Beat the addiction



...and save your health

CANCER RESEARCH UK



Smoking facts

Smoking is the biggest single cause of cancer in the world. In the UK it causes one in three of all cancer deaths.

This leaflet explains the dangers of smoking and offers many good reasons to quit whatever your age. It also shows where you can find help to stub out the habit once and for all.

Long time smokers are at high risk of developing lung cancer and other cancers. This leaflet outlines the signs and symptoms to look out for.

The hard truth

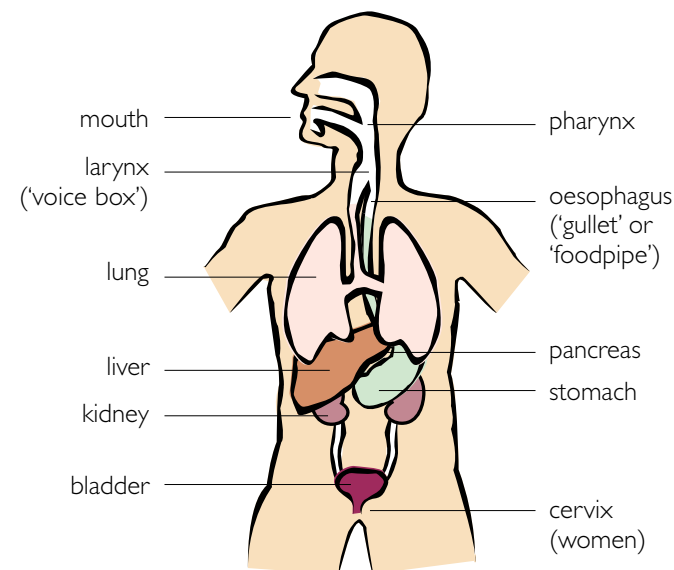
Smoking causes cancer, heart disease and stroke. It also causes chronic lung diseases such as bronchitis (infection of the lungs) and emphysema (lasting damage to the lungs). Half of all regular smokers will die from their habit – half of these in middle age. The more you smoke and the longer you smoke, the greater your risk of disease.

Smoking causes more unnecessary deaths in the UK than anything else. If all smokers in the UK quit, 120,000 lives a year would be saved.

Cancers caused by smoking

Smoking causes almost all cases of lung cancer in the UK. One person dies from lung cancer every fifteen minutes in this country.

Smoking, and chewing tobacco, causes many other types of cancer too. The parts of the body affected are shown in this diagram.



Smoking also increases your risk of leukaemia, a cancer of the lymph glands called Hodgkin's disease and some types of bowel cancer.

Second hand smoke

Breathing in smoke from other people's cigarettes also causes disease. This kills several hundred people each year in the UK. People who live with heavy smokers are worst hit – especially children. Children of smokers have a higher risk of bronchitis, asthma, pneumonia, sore throats, coughs, ear infections and other illnesses.

Why does smoking harm us?

There are about 4000 different chemicals in tobacco smoke and many of these are toxic, cause cancer or damage cells. The three main ingredients are...

- **nicotine** – a fast-acting, addictive drug that makes smokers crave cigarettes
- **carbon monoxide** – a poisonous gas that quickly enters the blood stream, lowering the oxygen supply and causing breathing problems
- **tar** – a sticky black residue made up of thousands of chemicals. It stays in the smoker's lungs and causes cancer.

Many people think 'low tar' cigarettes are less harmful. But smokers of these brands are likely to breathe in just as much tar, nicotine and other cancer-causing poisons as smokers of regular tar brands. In fact 'low tar' cigarettes are just as harmful as regular cigarettes.

Other harmful chemicals that have been found in cigarettes are...

- **acetone** – used in nail varnish remover
- **ammonia** – found in dry cleaning fluids
- **arsenic** – a deadly poison used in insecticides
- **benzene** – a cancer-causing solvent used in chemical manufacture
- **cadmium** – a poisonous metal used in batteries
- **formaldehyde** – a cancer-causing liquid used to preserve dead bodies

Know the early signs of cancer

Sadly, lung cancer is often caught too late. See your GP straight away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms. They may not be caused by cancer but should always be checked out...

- persistent coughing or hoarseness
- a change in a cough you have had for a long time
- being short of breath
- coughing up blood
- an ache or chest pain when breathing or coughing
- a chest infection that does not get better
- unexplained loss of weight or appetite

Smoking and chewing tobacco increases the risk of other cancers too. It is important that your doctor checks any new symptoms that do not go away within a few weeks.

Other effects of smoking

Women who smoke while pregnant greatly risk harming their unborn babies as well as themselves. Smoking in pregnancy is a major cause of premature birth and low birth weight.

Smoking can also cause impotence (problems with getting and keeping an erection), infertility (in men and women), premature aging of the skin (wrinkles), smelly breath and stained teeth.

Why quit?

If you smoke, giving up is the best thing you can do for your health.

Half of all regular smokers die prematurely and, on average, lose 20-25 years of life. There is no safe level of smoking – every cigarette, cigar or pipe you smoke harms your body. Stopping smoking immediately reduces your risk of developing cancer and many other serious diseases. The longer you stay off tobacco, the more you lower your risk. But it is never too late to give up.

If you stop smoking you can look forward to...

- improved fitness
- better health
- lower risk of illness
- feeling less tired and breathless
- more spare cash (£1750 a year if you smoke 20 a day)
- a sense of achievement
- freedom from the addiction to tobacco

Since the 1970s, UK men have had the world's sharpest drop in early deaths from lung cancer, as more and more smokers stop. Why not join the hundreds of thousands of men and women who quit for good each year?

You can quit for good!

If you are serious about quitting, there are many places to turn for help.

Ask your GP or the nurse at your surgery for advice. Some have 'stop smoking groups' where you can get free help. Visit your library to find books about stopping smoking or information on local support groups. Try one of the freephone helplines such as the NHS Smoking Helpline on **0800 169 0 169**.

Thought and planning will really help you to quit for good. Try to...

- get yourself motivated
- make a firm decision to stop smoking
- set a quit date (within two weeks of deciding)
- stick to the date and never try 'just one' cigarette

If your best attempt fails, don't rush into quitting before you are ready. Think about what went wrong and try to be prepared next time.

Nicotine replacement products (patches, gum, lozenges and so on) or the drug Zyban help many people stop smoking – your pharmacist can advise you, or ask your GP about getting them on prescription.

Smoking is addictive and quitting is often hard. You can be rightly proud of yourself when you succeed. Keep trying... it can take three or more attempts!

Further information

For more about cancer visit our patient information website www.cancerhelp.org.uk. Click on 'prevention and checks' then 'preventing cancer'. Or click on 'specific cancers' to find out about a particular cancer.

If you want to talk in confidence about cancer, call our **information nurses**. Direct line **020 7061 8355** or freephone 0800 (CANCER) 226237 or email cancer.info@cancer.org.uk

Order copies of this and other cancer awareness leaflets online at www.cancerresearchuk.org/leaflets

Visit our new anti-tobacco campaign website www.lowtarexposed.org

Visit the NHS site www.givingupsmoking.co.uk or call the NHS Smoking Helpline on **0800 169 0 169**.

About Cancer Research UK

Cancer Research UK is the leading charity dedicated to research on the causes, treatment and prevention of cancer. If you would like to support our work please call **020 7009 8820** or visit our website.

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