



HOW SMOKING AFFECTS YOUR HEALTH

Many of us link smoking to cancer. However, for most smokers it is heart and blood vessel disease, not cancer, that is their cause of death. Smoking accounts for nearly 440,000 deaths in the United States each year. Approximately 40,000 more people die from exposure to second-hand smoke. Smoking is the number one preventable cause of disease and death in the United States.

Smoking damages the lining of the arteries and causes plaque to buildup. These fatty deposits form along the inside of blood vessels and can restrict the flow of blood through the vessel. This buildup can lead to heart attack and stroke. Women who take birth control pills and smoke increase their risk of stroke many times. Smoking is also linked to:

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Irregular heartbeats
- Sudden cardiac death (SCD)
- Heart failure
- Peripheral arterial disease (plaque buildup in the arteries that lead to the legs and arms)
- Increased tendency for blood clotting
- Decreased exercise tolerance

THE BENEFITS WHEN YOU QUIT

- A longer life. Smokers who quit between ages 35-39 will add an average of 6 to 9 years to their lives. Those who quit at ages 65-69 will extend their life expectancy by 1 to 4 years.
- A reduced risk of heart and vascular disease
- A reduced risk of high blood pressure
- A reduced risk of high cholesterol
- A reduced risk of peripheral arterial disease and stroke
- A reduced risk of other diseases such as lung cancer, throat cancer, diabetes and lung related illnesses
- Improved health - look and feel better

RESOURCES TO HELP YOU QUIT SMOKING*

American Cancer Society at <http://www.cancer.org>

American Lung Association at <http://www.lungusa.org>

American Heart Association at <http://americanheart.org>

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute at http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/pubs/pub_gen.htm

**Listing of these web sites does not imply an endorsement of the material, content or program offerings in these sites.*