

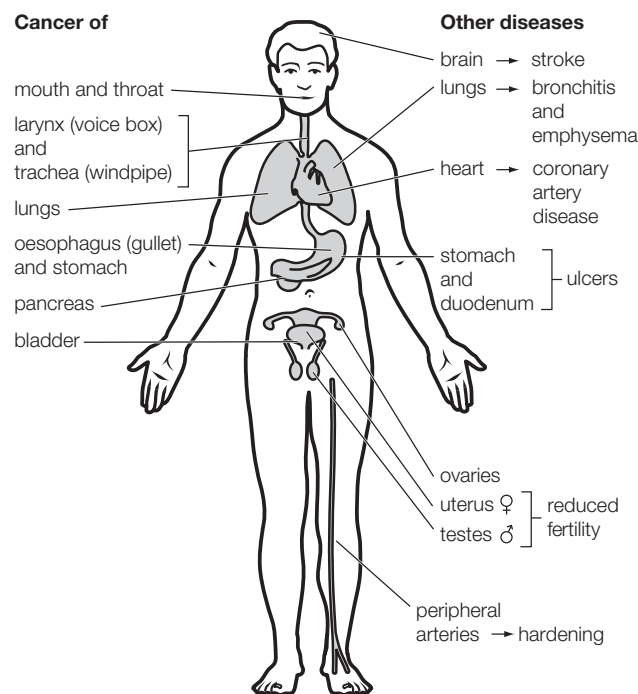
Smoking—quitting

What are the facts on smoking?

Each year over 20 000 Australians die from diseases caused by smoking. Out of every 5 people who smoke 20 or more cigarettes a day, 2 die before the age of 65.

- **Cancer:** Smoking is the major cause of death from cancer, especially lung cancer (86% caused by smoking).
- **Other lung disease:** Smoking causes chronic bronchitis (smoker's cough) and emphysema.
- **Hardening of the arteries:** Smoking can cause hardening of the arteries of the heart (angina and coronary attacks), brain (strokes) and legs.

Women smokers have problems with pregnancy (including smaller babies), increased chance of infertility, an earlier menopause and an increased risk of osteoporosis.



Harmful effects of smoking

What is in a cigarette?

The most harmful chemicals in cigarettes are tar, nicotine and carbon monoxide. Nicotine causes the addictive effect.

How will it help me if I quit?

The risk of death from heart attacks, lung cancer and other lung diseases will drop dramatically. Many of the bad effects of smoking can be reversed after quitting. Other reported good effects are increased 'wind' on exercise, better senses of taste and smell, improved sexual pleasure and much more pocket-money. It is unnatural to smoke.

How should I quit?

The best way is to stop completely, going 'cold turkey'. It may help to use nicotine gum or skin patches, because nicotine is very addictive. Changing to pipes or cigars is not as good as completely stopping. Gradual reduction (e.g. by 3 or 4 a day) is a reasonable method, but it is best if you can stop completely within 2 weeks.

What are the unpleasant effects of quitting?

For the first few days it is normal to have the withdrawal effects of feeling restless, irritable, tense, tired and sweaty. You will crave for a cigarette, but these feelings are signs of recovery from the addictive effects of nicotine as your body adjusts itself for a return to normal health. After about 10 days, most of these uncomfortable feelings will have disappeared and you will start feeling absolutely marvellous. Ask a smoker who has quit.

What are some good tips for quitting?

- Make a definite date to stop (e.g. during a holiday).

After quitting:

- Eat more fruit and vegetables (e.g. munch carrots, celery and dried fruit).
- Foods such as citrus fruit can reduce cravings.
- Chew low-calorie gum and suck lozenges.
- Increase your activity (e.g. take regular walks instead of watching TV).
- Avoid smoking situations and seek the company of non-smokers.
- Drink more water and avoid substituting alcohol for cigarettes.
- Be single-minded about not smoking—be determined and strong.
- Take up hobbies that make you forget smoking (e.g. water sports).
- Put aside the money you save and have a special treat. You deserve it!

Where can I get more help?

There are many quitting programs and community groups to help smokers. Many excellent tapes and booklets are also available. Chewing nicotine gum, using nicotine skin patches or inhaling nicotine-like asthma inhalations can help. However, these are only temporary measures and are generally not used for longer than 6 months.

A final word

Ask your general practitioner for help ASAP. Do not put it off—ask for help now. It is unnatural to keep smoking. Choose the good, healthy life.