



Stopping Smoking



“Cigarette smoking is the single largest preventable cause of death and disease in Australia”⁽¹⁾. Approximately half of all people who smoke regularly will be killed by their smoking habit. Most commonly these deaths will occur during middle age, at a time when many are still working and/or have children or grandchildren to care for. Smokers have a 70% greater risk of death from cardiovascular disease than non-smokers, and 3 times the risk of having a stroke.

Smoking can cause...

- Increased risk of heart disease, stroke and many cancers
- Male impotence
- Fertility and/or menstrual problems
- Pregnancy problems such as miscarriage, stillbirth and premature births
- Increased blood pressure and heart rate
- Slowed blood flow around the body
- Reduced ability to transport oxygen around the body
- Asthma and breathing difficulties
- Bad breath
- Smelly hair, clothes and hands
- Stained fingers and teeth
- Facial wrinkles
- Damage to the health of those you love, through passive smoking

Do you really want to stop?

The most important thing a smoker can do for their health is to quit smoking. Surveys reveal that more than 75% of Australian smokers do want to quit⁽²⁾. It is never too late for smokers to quit⁽³⁾. Even if you already have some form of cardiovascular disease quitting smoking can reduce your risk of a repeat cardiovascular episode (e.g. another heart attack). To successfully stop smoking you need to really want to achieve this yourself, rather than trying to give up because someone else wants you to.

Stopping successfully

- Call Heartline on 1300 362 787 for their ‘Smoking and Your Health’ booklet to help you get started on planning ahead for this major change in your lifestyle
- Contact Quitline on 131 848 and make use of their 24 hour counselling service
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist about using nicotine chewing gum, patches or inhalers
- Make your home a smoke free zone
- See a psychologist or counsellor to increase your likelihood of success
- Ask your friends and family to support you through this lifestyle change
- Determine the reasons why you smoke and times you’re most likely to smoke, and determine alternative strategies to use at these times

Quitting smoking is a process that sometimes takes several attempts. Don’t be discouraged with yourself if you have a relapse, as this is a normal part of the behaviour change process for most people. Just get back on track again when you’re ready. Never give up giving up!

References

1. National Heart Foundation. Cigarette Smoking, 2002.
2. Mullins R, Borland R. Do smokers want to quit? Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health 1996; 20(4):426-7.
3. Lightwood J, Fleischmann K, Glantz S. Smoking Cessation in Heart Failure: It Is Never Too Late, Journal of the American College of Cardiology 2001;37(6):1683-4.

Disclaimer

This fact sheet is provided for your information only and does not replace qualified medical advice. The information provided may not apply to every person or all situations. A medical practitioner should be consulted for all treatment and medication.

