

The Dangers of Smoking

Why you should stop smoking

According to the World Health Organization, smoking will be the number one cause of death in the World by 2030. In the United Kingdom, Canada and United States of America, smoking kills more people than drugs, road accidents, fires, alcohol and Aids combined. Research suggests that people who start smoking in their teens and continue for two decades or more will die 20 to 25 years earlier than non smokers.

What is in cigarettes?

Tobacco smoke is a cocktail of over 4,500 chemicals. When a person smokes, he or she takes in the smoke of burning tobacco which contain the following :

- Tar - a mixture of hundreds of chemicals that are carcinogenic (cancer causing substances).
- Nicotine – a stimulant drug, used as pesticides, addictive as heroin and alcohol.
- Carbon monoxide as in exhaust fumes.
- Naphthalene as in moth balls.
- Acetone as in paint stripper.
- Butane as in lighter fluid.
- Arsenic as in ant poisoning.
- Ammonia as in toilet cleaner.
- Phenol as in disinfectant and many more.

Why is smoking dangerous?

The following are some examples of smoking complications:

- Tar - the cooling off of the tobacco smoke which is brown and sticky, stains fingers and teeth and causes mouth, throat, bladder, lung, oesophagus, larynx cancers.
- Nicotine- A colourless fluid which causes addiction. It causes stomach and

headache symptoms, bronchitis, thrombosis and heart disease.

- Irritant substances- These are responsible for immediate coughing resulting in emphysema which creates difficulty in breathing.

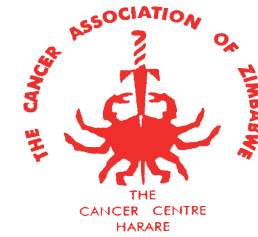
Some examples of conditions that are a result of smoking:

- Hair loss.
- Cataracts.
- Premature wrinkling of the skin.
- Hearing loss.
- Impotence.
- Tooth decay.
- Osteoporosis.
- Stomach ulcers.
- Uterine cancer.
- Psoriasis (non contagious skin disease).

Effects of passive smoking

Even if you do not smoke, breathing someone's smoke is dangerous as well. Problems occur such as :

- Headaches.
- Nasal discomfort and sneezing.
- Cough and sore throat.
- Nausea and dizziness.
- Increased heart rate and blood pressure.
- Heart disease.
- Cancers of the lung, cervix, breast, stomach and kidneys.
- Children who breathe second hand smoke are more likely to get colds, allergies, asthma and middle ear infections which may lead to deafness.
- Pregnant women exposed to second hand smoke may have miscarriages, low birth weight babies or still born babies.



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A close-up photograph of a smiling man with a shaved head, wearing a light pink shirt. He is holding a bright green apple in his right hand, which is positioned near his face. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue and white.

What can you do about passive smoking?

- Work towards making your home, workplace and community smoke free.
- Ask smokers not to smoke around you or your family.
- Ask visitors not to smoke in your home
- If you live with smokers, set up a place outside where they can smoke.
- Help smokers to quit smoking.
- Help children to be smart and never start smoking

Some tips for quitting smoking:

The following are some ways that have been used to help quitting. You can develop your own quitting programme:

- Make up your mind to quit and stay "Quit."
- If cigarettes give you a boost, try modest exercise, a brisk walk or the gym. Avoid indulging in a high carbohydrate diet.
- Choose an appropriate time to quit – e.g. after severe flu and when you have lost your taste.
- Make the day a memorable date.
- Make a list of why you want to quit and what you dislike about smoking.
- Make a saving strategy for money meant for cigarettes.
- Do not buy cigarettes by the cartons.
- Do not carry a lighter or matches with you.
- Put away ashtrays and create a different use for them such as putting flowers or filling them with walnuts.
- Keep your hands occupied, such as playing a musical instrument, knitting or painting.
- Brush your teeth regularly. Visit your dentist.
- Try to smoke while taking a shower.
- Get out of your old habits, seek new

activities, volunteer to do charity work, work at yourself to get fit and help a friend to quit smoking.

Other ways of helping one to quit smoking:

Please enquire for detailed information through your Doctor or pharmacist about :

- Nicotine replacement therapy.
- Use of hypnotherapy.
- Support groups for quitting smoking.

The benefits of quitting smoking:

In an individual who has been smoking twenty cigarettes a day the following benefits will be realized:

- It takes two hours of stopping smoking to have no more nicotine in the blood.
- It takes two days for nicotine by - products to leave the body.
- Within 6 hours, blood pressure drops, heart rate slows down.
- After three to 30 days blood pressure and heart rate become normal.
- Shortness of breath is reduced.
- Within three weeks, lungs start working better.
- Within two months, blood flow to the limbs improves.
- More energy is created.
- Blood components and linings in the lungs become normal.
- Teeth become whiter.
- After 12 months, risk of coronary heart disease is almost halved.
- After five years risk of lung cancer is halved.

"Smoking is dangerous to you and the people around you stop today."

