

Smoking is the single largest preventable cause of death and disease in Australia. Over 20,000 Australians die each year from diseases caused by smoking. Smoking is the major cause of death from cancer, especially lung cancer. Children of parents who smoke get more coughs, colds, asthma and respiratory infections. Passive smoking is a hazard to health. It's unnatural to keep smoking – with planning and determination **you can quit and stay a non-smoker.**

**What you inhale** - There are more than 4000 toxic chemicals in cigarettes and cigarette smoke. The most harmful chemicals are tar, carbon monoxide and nicotine.

- Carbon monoxide is a major component of tobacco smoke – it leaves your muscles, heart and brain with less oxygen.
- Nicotine is a drug that is addictive and can make it very hard, but **not impossible**, to quit.
- Lower tar or 'light' cigarettes aren't any better as you tend to take deeper puffs, sucking more tar into your lungs.

**Cancers** – smokers are 10 times more likely to die from lung cancer than non-smokers.

Smoking is a major cause of cancers of the oral cavity (tongue, lips, gums).

There is a link between smoking and stomach cancer.

**Heart Disease** – smoking causes hardening of the arteries resulting in angina, heart attacks and strokes.

Women who smoke and use oral contraceptives have a ten-fold increased risk.

**Lung Disease** – 10 times the risk of death from bronchitis and emphysema. More likely to get pneumonia.



**Women who smoke** – run a greater risk of osteoporosis, cancer of the cervix and vulva, menstrual problems and an earlier menopause.

**Sex and Fertility** – males who smoke may have a lower than normal sperm count and more abnormal sperm. Damage to the blood vessels in the penis can lead to impotence. Female smokers are less fertile and have a greater risk of miscarriage and complications in pregnancy and labour.

**Passive Smoking** – second hand smoke comes from both the burning end of a cigarette and from the smoke breathed out by a smoker. This harms not just the smoker, but also family members and co-workers. Passive smoking causes heart disease in non-smokers living with smokers.

**Pregnancy and Babies** – Babies born of smokers are lower in birth weight.

Smoking by the mother is one of the major risk factors for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) or cot death.

Babies of smokers are more likely to have respiratory infections and asthma.

Children exposed to smoke are more likely to snore and cough during the night and exposure can worsen asthma conditions.

Quitting makes a difference straight away, you can taste and smell food better. You smell better. Your cough goes away. You will have fewer days of illness and fewer health complaints:

Many of the bad effects of smoking can be reversed after quitting: -

- a few months - your heart and lungs will work better
- 12 months - your risk of heart disease will be almost halved.
- a few years - you will reduce your risk of lung cancer
- quitting saves money!

- You do not have to go 'cold turkey' to quit smoking. NRT can assist you to quit. NRT replaces some of the nicotine you crave when you stop smoking and helps reduce your body's need for nicotine. NRT can increase your chance of success in quitting.
- NRT works best for people who smoke 10 or more cigarettes per day.
- NRT is not the complete quitting solution. It should be used as part of an overall plan to quit.
- NRT is available as either a gum or skin patch and is available over the counter in pharmacies.
- Talk to your pharmacist and doctor to see if NRT is suitable for you and remember to tell them if you are taking any other medicines or have other conditions, such as heart disease.

### Getting Ready to Quit – Make a choice to live a good healthy life.

- Prepare yourself for quitting (refer *Relaxation Techniques* Fact Card) set a date (e.g. during a holiday). Find a friend to quit with you.
- Know when and why you smoke. Change your smoking routines.
- Ask a smoker who has quit just how great they feel.
- Start exercising, combine with healthy eating (see *Exercise and the Heart* and *Weight and Health* Fact Cards).

**On the Day you Quit** – Get rid of all your cigarettes. Put away your ashtrays. Change your routine. When you get the urge to smoke, do something else. Reward yourself at the end of the day for not smoking.

**Staying Quit** – refer *Staying a Non-Smoker* Fact Card.

*Quit because you can*  
Anti-Cancer Council of Victoria 1997

- *Staying a Non-Smoker*
- *Relaxation Techniques*
- *Exercise and the Heart*
- *Weight & Health*

**Your doctor** — listed under 'Medical Practitioners' in the yellow pages of the phone book

**Your State anti-cancer body** — listed under 'Cancer' in the white pages of the phone book

**Your State Quit office** — phone Quitline 131 848

**Your Self Care pharmacist.** To find:

ACT	(02) 6283 4777	NSW	(02) 9437 5941
TAS	(03) 6231 2636	VIC	(03) 9903 9600
QLD	(07) 3844 4900	WA	(08) 9388 2886
SA	(08) 8272 1211		

In case of poisoning phone the **Poisons Information Centre** on 131 126 from anywhere in Australia.

Pharmacists are medicines experts. Ask your pharmacist for advice when choosing a medicine.

Your **Self Care** pharmacist

Sponsored by

**NICORETTE**<sup>®</sup>

9 323449 000556

