



## Your Health

### Ten Reasons to Stop Smoking©

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It has now become pretty common knowledge that smoking is bad for you. Back in the 1930s until around the 1950s, cigarettes were actually ‘doctor approved’ and thought to actually be good for you! They claimed that tobacco could do a variety of things including disinfecting, relieving headaches and colds, warding off disease and fatigue, and even act as an anaesthetic. Nowadays we have clear evidence that this isn’t true, in fact, quite the opposite.

Ok so we know that smoking is bad. But why is it bad? What does it do to the body?

Here are 10 reasons why smoking is bad for you:

Number 1. Let’s start with the most well known effect of smoking. Cancer. Notice that we said cancer rather than lung cancer. If you think smoking only increases our chance of getting lung cancer – unfortunately that’s not it. Smoking also increases the risk of getting nose, mouth, voice box (a.k.a. larynx), windpipe (a.k.a. trachea), food pipe (a.k.a. Oesophagus), pancreas, kidneys, bladder, cervix, bone marrow and blood cancers. The reason so many organs are affected by smoking is due to the number of carcinogenic (a.k.a. cancer causing) chemicals in a cigarette. There are 41,000 chemicals in a cigarette with 43 of them known to cause cancer. If that wasn’t enough, on top of those there are also 400 other harmful toxins. These inhaled chemicals with the combination of heated vapour when inhaling – creates an environment that can lead to cell mutation and cancerous growth formation.

Number 2. The formation of wrinkles and premature aging. Smoking can create the appearance of fine lines, age spots, puffy eyes and lifeless dry skin. The reason this happens is because smoking causes the tiny blood vessels in your skin to constrict, which leads to a lack of blood and oxygen. Without these, your skin becomes more and more damaged over time.

Number 3. The heart and the brain. According to the CDC, a smoker is 2 to 4 times more likely than a healthy person to develop heart disease or have a stroke. Smoking achieves this by altering the composition of your blood and thickening it. On top of this, as mentioned earlier, smoking also constricts the blood vessels. This combination of thicker blood pumping through a more constricted vessel causes high blood pressure, which can lead to heart attacks and strokes.

Number 4. Ruining your lungs. The chemicals in cigarettes can leave a residue in your lungs, airways and other parts of the body leading to breathing problems. The consequential lack of blood and oxygen leads to many respiratory issues. Research has shown that smoking can lead to Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, pneumonia, lung infections, asthma and increases one's risk of suffering from tuberculosis.

Number 5. No more fun in bed. Smoking can reduce libido. It reduces your stamina and interest in sex.

Number 6. Seriously. No more fun in bed at all. Smoking can also lead to erectile dysfunction. As mentioned earlier, lighting up can decrease blood flow – which in this case means no more erection.

Number 7. Brittle bones. A large number of studies have found that smoking leads to a loss in bone density. This is because smoking increases the amount of calcium removed from the bones. This loss in bone density can lead to an early onset of osteoporosis, joint pain and even loss of teeth due to excessive loss of bone. This factor also puts you at risk of suffering from frequent fractures and a slower healing of injuries.

Number 8. Did we mention teeth? If your teeth falling out weren't bad enough, those that remain will be stained yellow.

Number 9. Bad breath. This is due to smoking killing the good bacteria in your mouth.

Number 10. Blindness. Here's an eye opener for you (or not, in this case), according to the CDC, smoking can lead to cataracts and optic nerve damage.

This week's advice is simple but very important. If you don't want to be wrinkled, toothless, breathless or blind with a high risk of the two biggest killers (cardiovascular disease and cancer), try to give up smoking as soon as you can.

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