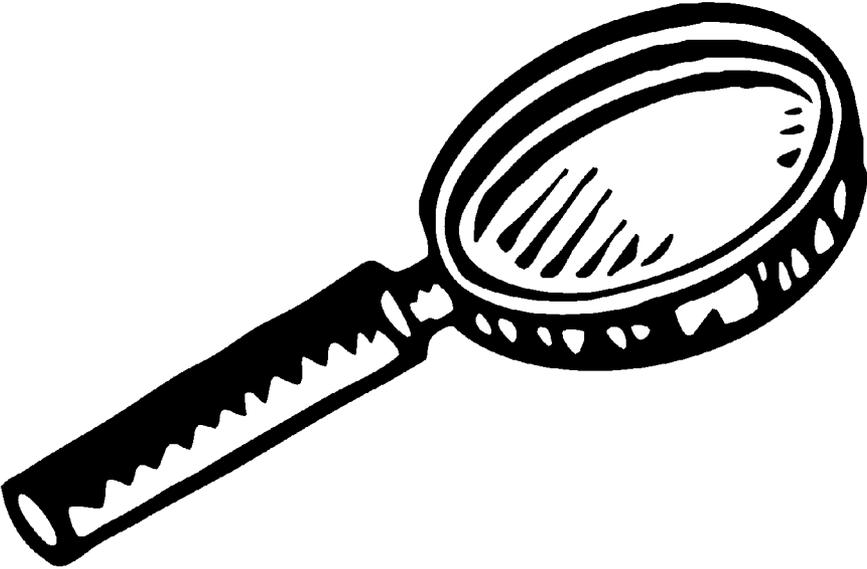


Large Type
Guide to Smoking

Fighting Cancer: *Your Decision, Your Choice*



Do Not Shorten Your Life by
Smoking Tobacco!

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Your Lungs

You probably don't think often about your lungs and the job they do. But if you get a chest cold or lung disease you suddenly realize how important your lungs are.

You breathe about 18 times a minute, every minute of your life. You have just one pair of lungs to breathe for as long as you live. Your body has backup systems for some jobs, but only your lungs can breathe. If you mistreat them by smoking you can expect damage. Some of it can't be fixed.

The Price Your Body Pays

Tobacco smoking — it doesn't matter whether the smoke comes from a cigarette, a cigar, or a pipe — causes emphysema, cancer, and other diseases. Emphysema makes the lungs unable to expand and contract.

Once you get emphysema, it can't be fixed. Every breath is a struggle. Your lungs cannot take in enough oxygen to support the other organs of your body. The lack of oxygen damages other organs and makes even the smallest task hard to do. The heart is so overworked that often it can no longer go on. This is why people sometimes die of emphysema.

What Is Cancer?

Your body is made up of millions of cells. New cells grow to replace old ones. Cancer is a kind of change in the way the new cells grow.

Sometimes the “sick” cells reproduce very quickly and form a small lump called a tumor. If a tumor is found early, it can be treated.

A Cancerous Tumor

Tumors steal nutrition and energy from the rest of your body. They can grow large enough to stop important functions in your body. If the growing process can't be stopped, the cancer will kill you.

One reason lung cancer is so deadly is that it can hide for years. In many cases, by the time it is found, the cancer has spread to the bones, brain, or other organs. By then the cancer has been growing for so long that it is almost always too late to stop it.

Lung cancer is not the only cancer caused by smoking. Scientists have found that smoking is related to cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidneys, pancreas, and other organs. One person's smoking can even damage the health of nonsmokers because second-hand

tobacco smoke contains many of the same poisonous substances that the smoker breathes in.

Tobacco Companies

Over the years the tobacco companies have worked hard to make smoking look stylish, tough, sophisticated, and glamorous. They do this to encourage you to spend your money on cigarettes. Cigarettes (and cigars and pipes) are actually dirty, stinky, and deadly. The tobacco companies won't tell you that.

Here's the truth: Smoking means drawing smoke, fire, and poisons into your lungs in order to give your body nicotine, a poisonous and addictive drug. Tobacco companies know the truth! They know that once you're hooked by nicotine it's very hard to quit. They don't care about the price your body pays for smoking. All they care about is your money. Someone has said that if the effects of smoking showed on our skins instead of damaging our lungs —

where we can't see the damage — no one would choose to smoke.

The decision is yours.
If you don't smoke, don't start.
If you smoke quit now!

Smoking Hurts Women

Lung cancer now kills more women than any other cancer. In the 30 years since it has become socially acceptable for women to smoke, the lung cancer death rate for women has gone up 452% — more than four and a half times.

If you are pregnant or planning to start a family, you should not smoke at all. Smoking retards the growth of your baby in your womb. Babies of mothers who smoke average nearly half a pound less than babies of women who do not smoke. Nicotine slows the flow of air and blood in your body, so your baby gets less oxygen and nourishment. Cigarettes contain carbon monoxide, a gas that reduces the amount of

oxygen in your baby's blood. Your baby's ability to receive and use vitamins is also disturbed.

The Smoke Around You

The risk of disease caused by inhaling tobacco smoke is not limited to the smoker. An “involuntary smoker” inhales less tobacco smoke than an active smoker does, because the smoke mixes with air. But an estimated 4,000 lung cancer deaths every year — nearly 3% of the annual lung cancer death toll — have been caused by involuntary smoking. One person's decision to smoke can affect the health of nonsmokers! Second-hand tobacco smoke contains many of the same poisons that the smoker breathes in. That's one of the reasons why more and more people, young and old, are telling smokers to go outside to smoke ... even if it's raining.

When You Quit Smoking

After you quit smoking, your blood pressure drops nearly to what it was before you had your last cigarette. One year after you quit your extra risk of coronary heart disease is half what it was while you were still smoking. Ten years after you quit, the lung cancer death rate is about half what it is for continuing smokers. Fifteen years after you quit, your risk of coronary heart disease is the same as if you had never smoked.

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Vision Loss Resources

You may contact Vision Loss Resources in Minnesota to obtain copies (brail, audio/spoken) of this material by calling 612-871-2222 or by visiting their website at www.visionlossresources.org.

Guide to Smoking
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