



# Young People and Smoking: the Fact File



## Nicotine is highly addictive

Many people who start smoking think they will be able to stop whenever they want but then discover just how difficult it is to give up.

### Did you know...

- One in two recreational users will become addicted.
- Smoking is more addictive than heroin, cocaine or alcohol.
- Up to 90% of smokers begin smoking before the age of 19.
- Young people are twice as likely to smoke if they have one or more parents who smoke.
- Symptoms of addiction (having strong urges to smoke, feeling anxious or irritable, feelings of depression, having unsuccessfully tried to not smoke) can appear within weeks or only days after becoming an 'occasional' smoker.
- Almost 50% of all urban litter is tobacco-related.

## Statistics on young people & smoking

- The 2002 Australian Secondary School Students Survey found the proportion of students who were current smokers (smoked in the 7 days preceding the survey) increased from 6% among 12 year olds to 25% among 17 year olds.
- The proportion of students smoking in the previous week almost doubled between the ages of 13(7%) and 14 (13%).
- It is estimated that 205,259 students were currently involved with tobacco smoking in that they had smoked at least one cigarette in the week prior to the study.

## The health effect: serial killer

Smoking has a cancerous or contaminating effect on every single organ or system in the human body.

- More than 19,000 Australians die prematurely each year from smoking.
- Smoking is a slow way to die. The effects on your body can cause years of suffering.
- One in two smokers will die prematurely of smoking related illness and disease.
- Smoking causes more sickness than any other drug in Australia.
- People who smoke are more susceptible to colds and flu, infections and asthma.
- Smoking can cause blindness, mouth, throat and/or lung cancer.
- Smoking doubles the risk of stroke and increases the risk of heart attack.
- Smoking causes 80% of lung cancers.
- Non-smokers have a 20%-30% higher risk of heart disease and lung cancer if they spend time around smokers. This risk increases with increased exposure to tobacco smoke.
- Second hand smoke is particularly harmful to babies.
- Children of parents who smoke inhale about the same amount of nicotine as if they were smoking 60-150 cigarettes a year.

## Smoking effects on your body

Smoking affects many parts of the body, both inside and outside. Some of the effects happen straight away and others take longer to occur:

- The tar in cigarettes collects on teeth, fingers and fingernails; staining them yellowish-brown.

- People who smoke age prematurely as wrinkles develop around the eyes and mouth sooner than in non-smokers.
- Smoking can also cause halitosis (bad breath) and hair loss.
- Smoking contributes to lowered fertility in both men and women.
- Smoking reduces fitness and people who smoke are less likely to participate in sports and physical activity.

## Mind if I don't smoke

If you are tempted to smoke or already smoke here's some strategies next time you feel like lighting up. Fighting the craving feeling does get easier.

- Call the Quitline on 131 848 to get the Quit book sent to you, or go to the Quit because you can book on-line <http://www.health.gov.au/pubhlth/quitnow/quitbook/index2.htm>
- Use the Quitbook's 4Ds model to help you cope: delay, drink water, deep breathe, and do something else.
- Do try to eat healthy foods and get some extra exercise.
- Visit a GP who can support you in quitting or not starting smoking.
- Recognise that social pressures may impact on your choice to, or not to, smoke. Get help and support from family and friends.
- Quitting smoking is a challenge and helps you believe in yourself and take on other challenges.
- Once you have been successful in quitting, find new ways to deal with stress and difficult emotions.
- Be proud of saying 'No thanks'.

## The benefits of quitting

- Quitting will improve your overall health.
- Changes from quitting begin within a few hours and many smokers notice improvements in their skin and sense of taste and smell in as little as a week.
- Cutting out one \$10 pack a day, could save \$3,650 in a year or \$70 a week leaving more money to spend on yourself.

- Helping our environment by not contributing to the damage and pollution created by tobacco waste.

## Tobacco and the law

- Legislative changes are moving towards total smoking bans in all public places, tough penalties for retailers who sell cigarettes to children and young people under 18, and greater restrictions on cigarette advertising.
- Explicit graphic warnings on cigarette packs and other tobacco products will be introduced in 2006 to fully inform consumers and in particular, alert young people to the dangers of smoking.

## Useful resources

- Kids Help Line 1800 55 1800 [www.kidshelp.com.au/](http://www.kidshelp.com.au/)
- National Quit line 131 848
- National Tobacco Campaign [www.quitnow.info.au/](http://www.quitnow.info.au/)
- OxyGen –Resources for Young People on smoking - [www.oxygen.org.au](http://www.oxygen.org.au)
- Reachout – helping young people help themselves - [www.reachout.com.au](http://www.reachout.com.au)
- REDI - a school drug resource kit <http://www.redi.gov.au/>
- Beyondblue – national depression initiative – campaign for young people at [www.ybblue.com.au/](http://www.ybblue.com.au/)

## Key research sources

- Australian Secondary Students Alcohol and Drug Survey 2002.
- National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2001 AIHW [www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/8227](http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/8227)
- The Quantification of Drug-caused Mortality and Morbidity in Australia, AIHW 1998 [www.aihw.gov.au/publications/phe/qdcmma98/index.html](http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/phe/qdcmma98/index.html)
- QUIT - Cancer Council Victoria [www.quit.org.au/](http://www.quit.org.au/)
- Social Costs of Drug Abuse in 1998 and 1992, National Drug Strategy Monograph 30, Collins & Lapsley, 1996 [www.nationaldrugstrategy.gov.au/publications/monographs.htm](http://www.nationaldrugstrategy.gov.au/publications/monographs.htm)
- Tobacco in Australia; Facts and Issues, 1995 [www.quit.org.au/quit/FandI/welcome.htm](http://www.quit.org.au/quit/FandI/welcome.htm)