

TOBACCO

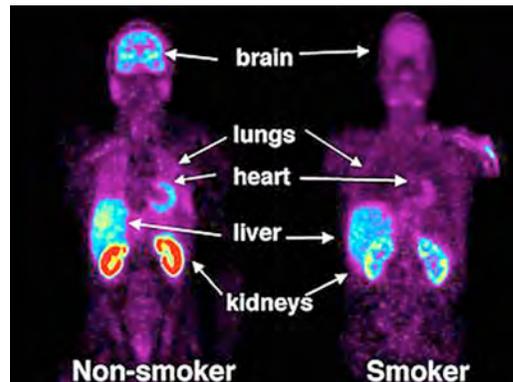


Tobacco is a deadly, addictive product. The extreme addictiveness of tobacco and the full range of health dangers are not fully understood or realized by the public.

The Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) has issued this statement: “Every person should be informed of the health consequences, addictive nature and mortal threat posed by tobacco consumption and exposure to tobacco smoke.” The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that tobacco use kills 5.4 million people each year. That means that unless steps are taken to curb this problem, one billion people worldwide will die in this century as a result of using tobacco products.

Health Harms from Smoking

- smoking causes cancer of the lung, larynx, esophagus, oral cavity, bladder, pancreas, uterus, cervix, kidney and stomach.
- smoking causes respiratory diseases.
- smoking causes most cases of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis.
- smoking causes heart disease and heart attacks.
- other physical and medical problems associated with smoking include:
 - reduced fertility and impotence in men
 - rheumatoid arthritis
 - hearing loss and vision problems, including cataracts
 - chronic coughing
 - more susceptible to influenza and severe symptoms with the flu because of weakened immune system
 - decreased physical performance



Health Harms from Smokeless Tobacco Use

Smokeless tobacco products are as addictive as cigarettes and cause the same type of dependence.

Smokeless tobacco users are at heightened risk for oral cancer. Constant exposure to tobacco juice causes cancer of the esophagus, pharynx, larynx, stomach and pancreas. Spit tobacco causes leukoplakia, a disease of the mouth characterized by white patches and oral lesions on the cheeks, gums and/or tongue. Leukoplakia can lead to oral cancer.

Smokeless tobacco causes gum disease and tooth decay.

Each country has its own popular forms of smokeless tobacco. Sweden has strict manufacturing laws so some Swedish brands have lower levels of nitrosamines and other toxins and carcinogens. On the other end of the spectrum, in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, the Lao People's Republic, Cambodia, the Philippines and Palau, smokeless tobacco products such as betel quid with tobacco, areca nut with tobacco, or gutka had significantly higher rates of oral pharyngeal, and esophagus cancers.

People who chewed betel quid with tobacco also showed higher prevalence of leukoplakia.

Health Harms as a Result of Pregnant Women Smoking or Being Exposed to Secondhand Smoking

Smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke among pregnant women is a major cause of spontaneous abortions, premature births, stillbirths, sudden infant death syndrome and many other complications.

Smoking during pregnancy creates a more serious risk of spontaneous abortion and a greater threat to the survival and health of newborns and children than using cocaine during pregnancy.

In addition, smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke during pregnancy directly increases the risk of each of the following:

- growth retardation/birth weight
- future obesity in children
- cancer-causing agents in infant blood
- childhood leukemia
- infantile colic
- respiratory disorders in childhood
- eye problems in childhood
- mental retardation
- attention deficit disorder
- other learning and developmental problems
- behavioral problems
- youth and adult violence and criminality
- smoking during adolescence
- various health problems in adulthood



Smoking by fathers prior to conception and while the mother is pregnant (exposing her to secondhand smoke) may also increase the risk of childhood cancers, mental retardation, and respiratory problems among offspring, even when the mother does not smoke.

Exposure to parental smoking after birth can cause physical, developmental and behavioral problems to offspring that can extend throughout their entire lives.

For more detailed information, go to www.tobaccofreekids.org