

# SMOKING.....



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## **Second Hand , Direct or Not at all - The decision is yours !**

*Everybody knows that smoking causes cancer but what facts do they really have to prove that second hand smoke has any effect on other people? & What's the point in trying to quit after smoking for 15 or 20 years?*

Second-hand smoke contains over 4000 chemicals and at least 50 of them can cause cancer. Even when a smoker inhales, researchers have shown that 2/3 of the smoke from the burning cigarette goes into the environment affecting non-smokers. Let's say that you don't get lung cancer from any of the 50 chemicals in second hand smoke, what else can happen?

- 1) Carbon monoxide in tobacco smoke enters the bloodstream replacing oxygen. This means your heart would have to work harder to push the blood through the arteries which could eventually lead to heart problems.
- 2) Nicotine causes plaque to build up inside the walls of your arteries which leads to a narrowing of the arteries causing heart disease.
- 3) The tars from smoke irritates and damages the lung's so that breathing becomes more difficult leading to chronic bronchitis, emphysema and heart failure.
- 4) Smoking causes lung cancer but is also responsible for cancer of the oral cavity (your mouth), pharynx, larynx (throat), esophagus, pancreas, kidney, urinary bladder, and cervix and is possibly responsible for cancer of the kidney and large intestine.

So what does all of this mean?

**If you smoke or you breath in second hand smoke you are hurting your lungs, heart and other important organs.**

Believe it or not young adults are being recruited. You are the tobacco industries "replacement smokers". You see, the industry must replace quitters with new smokers, and it must replace the estimated 3 million adults worldwide who die each year of tobacco-caused diseases. Most individuals do not start smoking after age 20, so young adults are the most important customers to tobacco companies. Young smokers = lifetime addiction + lifetime profits.

Peer pressure is one of the biggest reasons that young people start to smoke. This does not mean that friends necessarily forced you to try a cigarette. This does mean that somewhere along the way you chose to smoke a cigarette either to be a part of a group, to look cool, to feel a sense of belonging, to just try something new or because you grew up in an environment where smoking was very acceptable and normal to you. No one starts smoking with the intention to become addicted. Some individuals just try a cigarette "to say they have tried it" and these individuals may not continue to smoke because it really does taste bad and makes you feel sick to your

stomach the first few times you try one. The individuals who tend to continue smoking are those who start due to peer pressure even when they don't enjoy those first few cigarettes, they continue smoking for the reasons listed above. Eventually you become addicted to cigarettes and are unable to quit easily. Cigarettes are said to be more addictive than many illegal drugs.

After smoking 15 or 20 years it may seem pointless to quit smoking but in many cases the damage done by tobacco can be reversed. Within minutes of smoking that last cigarette, the body begins to repair itself. Within different time frames, changes will happen in our bodies.

- Within 20 minutes .... your blood pressure will drop to normal. Body temperature increases to normal.
- By 8 hours... carbon monoxide levels in the blood drop and oxygen levels increase to normal.
- By 24 hours... chance of heart attack begins to decrease.
- By 48 hours... food begins to taste and smell better.
- After a week.... your body will be free of nicotine.
- After 1 month.... your coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, and shortness of breath will begin to decrease.
- By 9 months...walking becomes easier and smoker's cough will be fading away. The body's overall energy will increase. Circulation improves: no more cold hands and feet.
- At 1 year... risk of heart disease is half that of a smoker.
- After 5 years..... your risk of dying from lung cancer will have dropped by 50%.
- After 15 years.... your risk of coronary heart disease will fall to that of a person who has never smoked at all.
- By 10 - 15 years... chance of dying from lung cancer is about the same as that of a non-smoker. Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, wind pipe, bladder, kidney and pancreas drops. Risk of heart disease becomes that of a non-smoker.

January 19<sup>th</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup>, 2004 is National Non-Smoking week. Weedless Wednesday (January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2004) is the focal point of this week. The idea behind Weedless Wednesday is to promote a "one day at a time" approach to quitting smoking. The goal of this initiative is to raise public awareness on the benefits of cessation programs and the community resources available to help smokers quit. So take this opportunity to seriously consider quitting because it is never too late. If you do not smoke, keep it that way! Your life is worth more.

### **Did you know?**

- 1) The average age for first smoking a whole cigarette is 12.7 years.
- 2) Every year, tobacco kills three times more Canadians than alcohol, AIDS, illegal drugs, car accidents, suicide and murder-combined.
- 3) The percentages of males and females who smoke cigarettes are about equal.
- 4) The percentage of students who smoke cigarettes is 1.3 times higher than was found 5 years ago.
- 5) For nonsmokers married to smokers, second-hand smoke increases the risk of death from heart disease by 20-30%.

Printed from:

Canadian Cancer Society- pamphlet titled "What's your Poison"

Break Free pamphlet "Tobacco Facts", 1996.

"Nova Scotia Student Drug Use 1996 Highlights Report" & "Smoke-Free for Life : A smoking prevention curriculum supplement" Department of Health, Drug Dependency and Tobacco Control Unit.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to call the Student Health Centre at 364-2163 to book an appointment with the Registered Nurse/Educator or call 364-2255 to see the Mount Allison Personal Counsellors on smoking cessation programs available.