

KICK IT.



The downside of smoking

Smoking tobacco can have serious effects that impact on both your health and your wallet.

Immediate and short-term effects of smoking

Despite what many people believe, there are some immediate downsides to this whole smoking caper – mainly things that tend to make smokers a little less attractive. For example:

- bad smelling hair
- unhealthy skin
- smelly breath
- stained teeth
- coughs and colds
- reduced fitness
- stained fingers.¹

Medium and long-term effects of smoking

Most people know there are potential long-term consequences from regular smoking, but don't tend to think too much about exactly what those consequences might be. Make no mistake - regular smoking dramatically increases your chance of developing serious conditions like:

- lung and other cancers
- coronary heart disease
- stroke
- emphysema and other chronic lung diseases
- blindness
- gum disease
- infertility/impotence.²

Effects of smoking on the body

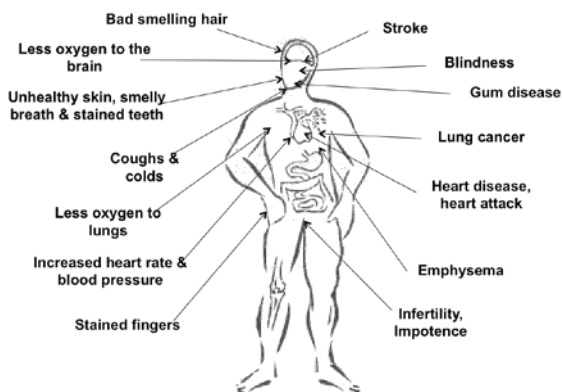


Diagram 1: Short, medium and long-term health effects of smoking

Well, we all have to die of something, right? Sure. It's just that plenty of the people who suffer these long-term conditions will live with them for years or die prematurely. They can be painful, nasty and unpleasant. Most people's retirement plan doesn't involve being blind, coughing up blood or getting around with an oxygen tank.

Effects of Passive Smoking

You've probably heard of 'passive smoking'. Basically, 'passive smoke' comes from the burning end of a cigarette or is breathed out from a smoker's mouth.

When people other than the smoker breathe in that smoke, it's called passive smoking (it's also called things like 'annoying' or 'disgusting').

So what's the big deal? It's not like a little smoke is going to kill them.

As it turns out, it could. Research shows that breathing in air polluted by tobacco smoke can lead to a whole bunch of health problems, ranging from annoying to deadly. Check out the list of possible consequences:

- sore and/or watery eyes
- sneezing, coughing and a sore throat
- breathing problems
- respiratory problems such as pneumonia and bronchitis
- slower lung growth and decreased lung function
- increased risk of lung cancer and heart disease
- asthmatics experience wheezing and chest tightening.³

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Here's the kicker – people who never smoke, but live with a smoker, have been estimated to have a 30% increase in their risk of developing lung cancer. Each year in Australia, there are cancer deaths in people who haven't smoked a day in their lives - not voluntarily, anyway.⁴

So take note: your smoking can be damaging the health of others, particularly if you smoke inside homes and cars.

Effect on finances

Money: it's nice to have, but if you're a smoker, the chances are you'll have less of it than other people. Nicotine craving can end up cramping your style if you are spending money on cigarettes rather than entertainment, groceries and bills. Smoking can result in more short-term health problems like colds and flu's, which need treatments that cost money. The money saved by not smoking could be being spent on things like CDs, iPods, a TV or car - things that actually make your life more enjoyable.

Benefits of being smoke-free

There's more to not smoking than possibly avoiding a slow and painful death at some point in the future. There are plenty of benefits that kick in almost as soon as you give up smoking. For example:

- fresh breath
- clothes, hair and personal items don't smell bad
- fingers and teeth are not stained
- better skin
- less coughing, fewer colds, less phlegm
- less likely to suffer from shortness of breath
- better physical fitness
- more money
- a better sense of smell and taste
- fewer and less severe asthma attacks
- healthier lungs
- being part of the majority – most young people don't smoke!⁵

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After you kick it!

As soon as you quit smoking your body starts to repair the damage that's been done. Here's a quick look at what happens from the moment after you smoked that last cigarette:

20 Mins	Comedown: Your blood pressure and pulse rate drop to normal.
2 Days	Welcome back taste buds: Your ability to taste and smell starts to return to normal.
2 Weeks	Fighting fit: Your circulation improves, and your lung function increases by up to 30%.
1 Month	Kicked it: Most nicotine withdrawal symptoms disappear. Once you get this far, you've beaten the physiological addiction.
3 Months	Coughie break: That smoker's cough disappears.
5 Years	Here's to your health: Your risk of lung cancer has decreased by half, and your risk of a stroke is now the same as a non-smoker.
10 Years	Breathe easy: Your risk of dying from lung cancer is now the same as a non-smoker – all those nasty pre-cancerous cells have been replaced with healthy ones.
15 Years	Fully repaired: Your risk of coronary heart disease is now the same as a non-smoker. Incidentally, over 15 years you would have saved around \$75,000 if you smoke a pack a day, or around \$37,500 if you smoke half a pack a day. Not too shabby.

¹ Smarter than Smoking fact sheet – The effects of smoking on the body. www.OxyGen.org.au.

² Smarter than Smoking fact sheet –The effects of smoking on the body. www.OxyGen.org.au.

³ Smarter than Smoking fact sheet – Second hand smoking www.oxygen.org.au

⁴ National Health & Medical Research Council. The health effects of passive smoking: A scientific information paper. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1997.

⁵ WA Centre for Health Promotion Research, Curtin University of Technology. Keep Left. 2001