



Why Stop Smoking?



If you weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of being a smoker or a non-smoker, you will always come to the same conclusion – there is no good reason to choose to be a smoker because **smoking does absolutely nothing for you at all** - other than destroy your health, empty your pocket, make you smell and considerably shorten your life.

Each cigarette smoked knocks 11 minutes off your life! If you smoke an average number of cigarettes a year (about 5,772 = 16 a day) from the average starting age of 17 until your death at 71, you will have consumed 311,688 cigarettes in your lifetime! Given that an average smoker loses 6 ½ years off their life, this then means that each cigarette costs **11 minutes off your life!** (BMJ 2000; 320:53)

When you stop smoking, after three weeks 99% of the nicotine will have left your body and you will be well on your way to becoming a non-smoker.

Some Facts About Smoking



- There are over 2,000 chemical compounds in tobacco smoke. About 30 of those are known carcinogens, tar and of course, nicotine and many are lethal poisons including arsenic, cyanide, ammonia, carbon monoxide and formaldehyde.
Not forgetting the insecticides and chemical fertilizers sprayed onto the tobacco crops
- A smoker's heart beats 10,000 times a day more than that of a non-smoker
- Smoking cuts oxygen to the brain by 25% reducing concentration and thinking ability
- A smoker on just 20 cigarettes a day puts 2 pints of tobacco tar into their lungs every year
- Smoking causes narrowing of the arteries that leads to heart attacks
- Smoking causes high blood pressure which leads to strokes
- Lung cancer is the largest cause of all cancer deaths, and smoking causes the vast majority of those
- Smoking suppresses the digestive system so many of the nutrients in food are not absorbed leaving the smoker susceptible to health problems and digestive disorders
- Smoking suppresses the immune system leaving the smoker more prone to infections and then less able to deal with them when they are ill. It is also the immune system that protects the body from corrupt cell division that causes cancer

- Smokers have a higher incidence of bladder and kidney cancer because the chemicals from tobacco tars, which have been absorbed into the blood stream, are excreted through the urine
- Smoking increases the aging process to the point where a 50 year old smoker will be as old physically as a 70 year old non-smoker
- Smoking causes wrinkles, aging of the skin, and a sallow complexion
- Smokers have an unpleasant stale tobacco smell that permeates though the skin, hair breath, sticking to clothes, furnishings, in fact everything
- The sexual potency of smokers decreases more rapidly with age than that of non-smokers
- Smoking attacks the very building blocks of life itself, the DNA. It attacks the eggs in the ovaries and it destroys sperm, reducing the count to levels where the chance of fathering healthy children is reduced and the danger of damage to the foetus is increased
- Women who smoke in pregnancy are poisoning and depriving their unborn baby of oxygen and nutrients. These babies are also born addicted to nicotine and are frequently born less content and more irritable, so not a good start to a new life. As they grow up they are more prone to respiratory infections, particularly if living in a smoking environment at home

The False Belief That Smoking Relieves Your Stress

Smoking will actually increase any stress that you do have ... **not relieve it!**

When you are stressed from external pressures and worries or even thoughts of not being able to cope, your amazing body tries to help by firing yourself preservation function which it does in the belief that you are in danger! That is your 'stress response', or your 'fight and flight' response. It's when the adrenaline is released, the muscles tense ready for action, your heart rate goes up, your breathing rate increases, and you may start to sweat ... there are many more symptoms but all are to ensure your safety in the face of danger ... real or perceived!



When you light that cigarette, you attack the body again, this time by inhaling poisonous substances, so the stress response just increases. Your original stress has now been made worse ... not better!

Why does it feel like it has helped? Addiction is crafty. Your subconscious has been fooled into believing that the nicotine introduced into your system is now necessary for your survival, so sends out a signal for more supplies whenever the nicotine level drops, much as in the same way it sends out a signal that you recognize when you are hungry or thirsty. These signals create a discomfort, a kind of 'empty' feeling that motivates you to take action to remedy the unpleasant sensation. The more nicotine the system is used to, the more the demands for nicotine will be signalled for. **This is nicotine craving and addiction!**

When you experienced the first symptoms of stress, that nicotine craving or discomfort was also present, so when you light up and inhale, the nicotine top-up alleviates your nicotine craving discomfort so giving the illusion that you now feel better!

What Happens When I Quit Smoking?

Once you quit smoking your health will improve more and more each day!
Here are some of the health benefits you have to look forward to:



AFTER

NOTICABLE HEALTH BENEFITS

20 minutes	Your blood pressure and pulse will return to normal.
8 hours	The nicotine and carbon monoxide levels in your blood will have halved.
24 hour	The carbon monoxide is eliminated from your body and your lungs will resume their natural cleaning process, expelling the accumulated tar. Your chances of having a heart attack are already decreasing.
48 hours	Your senses of taste and smell will begin to improve and almost all of the nicotine in your body has been eliminated.
72 hours	Your bronchial tubes begin to relax and you can breathe more easily. Your lung capacity begins to increase and walking starts to become easier.
2-12 weeks	Your breathing becomes noticeably easier as the bronchial tubes begin to relax and your lung function increases by up to 30%. Your circulation also improves, making physical exercise much easier.
3-9 months	Coughs and breathing problems disappear. Sinus congestion, fatigue and shortness of breath continue to decrease and your overall energy increases. The cilia re-grow in your lungs thus increasing your ability to handle mucus and to clean out your lungs and to reduce infection.
1 to 5 years	Your risk of developing serious and/or life threatening illness continues to decrease with each month and year that you remain a non-smoker.

Counting the Cost!

An average smoker (20 per day) spends almost £3,000 (UK)/\$5,055 (USA) a year

(Cigarettes cost more in Australia and China)

Smoking cigarettes is a very expensive habit. Smokers often avoid thinking about exactly how much their habit forces them to sacrifice financially.

- In a lifetime, an average smoker starting at 20 years old, on twenty cigarettes a day will spend almost £165,000/\$278,000 on their habit.
- Smoking 40 a day for a lifetime, with costs only going up - £330,000/ \$555,000 will go up in smoke!!

Use this chart to help you count the cost of your smoking habit:

My brand of cigarette costs:

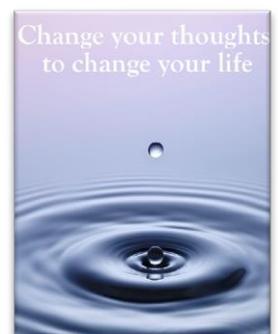
How many I smoke a day?	Cost per week =	Cost in 1 yr.	Cost in 5 yrs.	Cost in 10 yrs.	Cost in 20yrs.	Cost in 50 yrs. Your lifetime!

Do you really have money to burn?



Useful Tips to Help You Stop Smoking and Insure Your Success

- **Be positive** and excited about your decision to be a non-smoker, focus on what you are gaining, you are giving up NOTHING and getting back your confidence, self-control, courage, health, freedom from fear ... your life! Rejoice!!
- **Drink plenty of water**, 6 to 8 glasses (1 to 1 ½ litres minimum), to help flush out all the toxins and chemicals through the kidneys.
- Eat plenty of fruit; you particularly need the vitamins B and C which will help the immune system to recover more quickly. **Consider a vitamin supplement.**
- There is no physical pain in the withdrawal from nicotine, just an empty restless feeling that will soon disappear as your body returns to a healthy state which usually takes between 1 & 3 weeks, and after 3 weeks 99% of all the nicotine will have left your body.
- It will help if you can **cut down on your caffeine intake** as caffeine overload can mimic the nicotine withdrawal symptoms.
- Remember that nicotine is a stimulant and won't relax you so sit down or move away from a stressful situation, just like the non-smokers. **Breathe slowly and calmly, remember your 12 deep breaths each waking hour for the first 3 days.**
- Iced water (with lemon?), chilled orange juice or crushed ice can all help to refresh the mouth and also reduce that empty withdrawal feeling.
- Nicotine substitutes will only keep you hooked, you don't need them.
- You don't need that spare packet hidden away somewhere as a safety net, if you are genuine in your desire to stop, make it difficult to get a cigarette should you have a moment of weakness, the craving will have passed before you can go & buy any more leaving you still in control & a non-smoker.
- It's ok to think about cigarettes, it's **what** you think that matters so think positively ... YES, I'm free!
- **NEVER** have another cigarette, don't try just one to prove or check that you don't like it anymore.



If you need help to stop smoking, start by talking to your Doctor

Further information can be found on:

www.ash.org.uk/information

www.smokefree.nhs.uk