

World No Tobacco Day



Every year on the 31st of May, the world celebrates **World No Tobacco Day** to raise awareness of the health risks and dangers of tobacco use, and ultimately stop tobacco use worldwide.

This year's theme, "**Tobacco: Threat to our environment**", aims to increase awareness about the environmental impact of tobacco, including cultivation, production, distribution, and waste. It will also encourage people to quit using tobacco.

Smoking and tobacco facts:

CDC statistics indicate that:

- Worldwide, about 7 million people are killed each year by tobacco use alone. It is known to be the leading cause of throat and lung cancer, and to be one of the most significant risk factors for most other cancers, heart problems and other diseases.
- For every person who dies because of smoking, at least 30 people live with a serious smoking-related illness.
- Smoking causes cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung diseases, diabetes, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis.
- Smoking also increases the risk of tuberculosis, certain eye diseases, and problems with the immune system, including rheumatoid arthritis.
- On average, smokers die 10 years earlier than non-smokers.



What is tobacco?

Tobacco is a plant grown for its leaves, which are dried and fermented before being put in tobacco products. Tobacco contains nicotine, an ingredient that can lead to addiction, which is why so many people who use tobacco find it difficult to quit. There are also many other potentially harmful chemicals found in tobacco or created by burning it.



How can tobacco affect your body?

- **Brain:** Nicotine immediately stimulates the adrenal glands to release the hormone epinephrine (adrenaline) when entering the bloodstream. Epinephrine stimulates the central nervous system and increases blood pressure, breathing, and heart rate.
- **Heart and Blood Vessels:** Nicotine causes blood vessels to constrict or narrow, which limits the amount of blood that flows to the organs. Over time, the constant constriction results in blood vessels that are stiff and less elastic. Constricted blood vessels decrease the amount of oxygen and nutrients in cells, possibly increasing the heart rate and blood pressure, as well as the risk of microinfarction.
- **Lungs:** Smoking harms lung capacity. The tar in cigarette smoke coats the lungs and makes the air sacs less elastic. Smoking also produces phlegm that can make the lungs congested. Smoking even a few cigarettes a day can decrease the body's ability to use oxygen effectively.
- **Gum Disease:** Smoking contributes to a periodontist, a gum infection that destroys the bone that supports the teeth. It is a major cause of tooth loss in adults.

The benefits of quitting smoking

Quitting smoking is one of the most important actions people can take to improve their health, regardless of their age or how long they have been smoking.



Quitting smoking:

- Improves health status and enhances quality of life
- Reduces the risk of premature death and can add as much as 10 years to life expectancy
- Reduces the risk for many adverse health effects, including poor reproductive health outcomes, cardiovascular diseases, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and cancer
- Benefits people already diagnosed with coronary heart disease or COPD
- Benefits the health of pregnant women and their foetuses and babies
- Reduces the financial burden that smoking places on people who smoke, healthcare systems, and society

Quitting smoking reduces the risk of different cancers, including:

- Leukaemia
- Bladder
- Lungs
- Cervix
- Colon and rectum
- Oesophagus
- Kidney, pancreas, stomach, and liver
- Mouth, throat, and larynx

Recommendations:

Quit tobacco use, as it will help the lungs and heart work better. Within 20 minutes of quitting, heart rate and blood pressure drop. After 12 hours, the carbon monoxide level in the bloodstream drops to normal. Within 2-12 weeks, circulation improves, and lung function increases. After 1-9 months, coughing and shortness of breath decrease.



Remember

- Second-hand smoke can lead to lung cancer and heart disease, as well as other health effects in adults and children.
- Both behavioural treatments and medication can help people quit smoking, but the combination of medication with counselling is more effective than either alone.
- Nicotine overdose is possible, though it usually occurs in young children who accidentally chew on nicotine gum or patches, or swallow e-cigarette liquid.