

SMOKERS

thinking about giving up?



The traditional smoking ceremony cleanses and protects the strength of the spirit. Tobacco smoking is not part of our culture and harms the body.

This booklet is written for Aboriginal people who are trying to make up their mind whether to stop smoking. Most of our people have smoked for a long time and like smoking. A health worker can provide you with information about quitting smoking. You can also see your doctor, nurse or call the **Quitline on 13 7848 (13 QUIT)** for the cost of a local call.

What our mob thinks about smoking

What I don't like about smoking

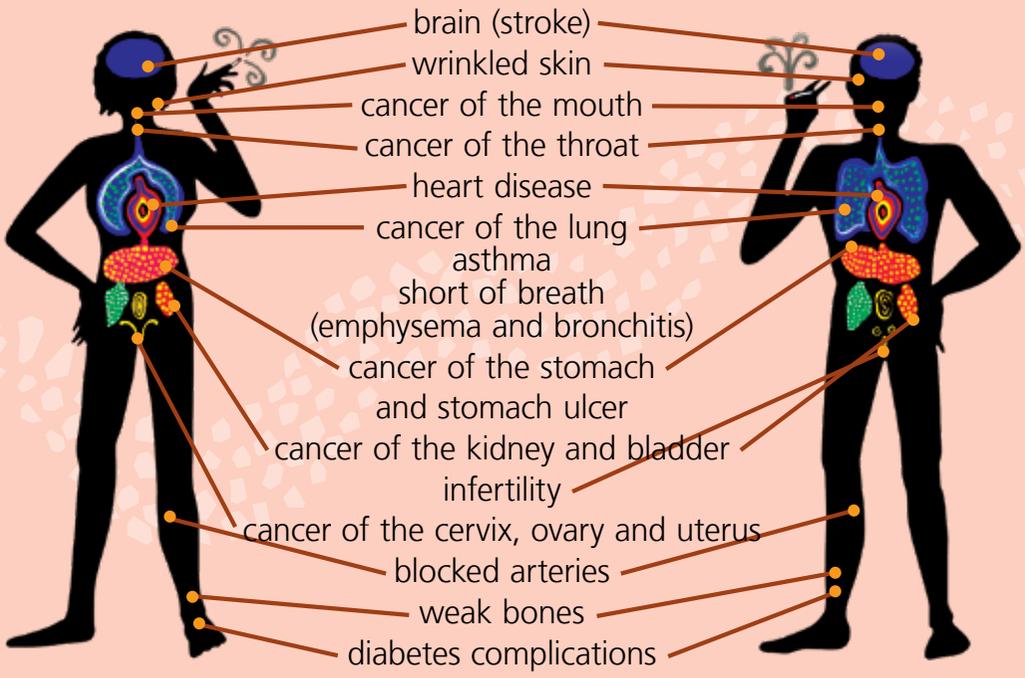
Costs me lots of money
Gives me bad breath
Makes me cough
Makes my chest feel tight
Makes me feel breathless
Increases my blood pressure
My kids don't like it
I hate it when I run out of smokes
Makes my clothes smell
Everyone asks me for a durr
Hate hanging for a smoke
It's bad for my diabetes
Can't run as much
It causes cancer

What I like about smoking

Relaxes me
Keeps me going
– gives me a boost
Gets me started
Tastes good
Nice with tucker or a drink
Can share with my friends
Love to have one when having a yarn
Coping with stress
Something to do when I'm bored
Keeps my weight down
Makes me look deadly

Every cigarette you smoke is doing you damage

These are the common dangers of smoking to your body.



Many of our mob find it hard to believe but **smoking actually causes more deaths and sickness in our communities than alcohol**. This is because we see the effects of alcohol on our mob every day but we can't really see the effects of smoking.

Smoking causes heart and lung diseases, which are the two biggest killers in our communities. It also causes diseases such as stroke, cancer of the throat, mouth, stomach, pancreas and kidney, and weak bones. Smoking can make diabetes and asthma worse. It also leads to earlier death and poorer health during your life.

Heart Disease

Smoking blocks the blood vessels that take oxygen to the heart. You are 3 times more likely to have a heart attack if you smoke.

Stroke

Smoking can block the blood vessels in your brain causing a stroke.

Circulation

Smoking can block arteries in your legs. When blood flow is too little, this can lead to sores not healing and amputation of toes or legs. This is made worse if you have diabetes.



Cancer

If you smoke, your risk of cancer is much higher than a non-smoker's. Tobacco smoke is made up of lots of poisons e.g. tar, carbon monoxide, arsenic, and ammonia. These poisons get into most parts of your body and can cause cancer in all organs of the body.



Your lungs

If you smoke you are more likely to damage your lungs (get bronchitis and emphysema), which makes breathing very hard and noisy. When people stop smoking, at first they often cough more. This is good, they are cleaning the tar from their lungs.



Pregnancy

Smoking when you are pregnant means your baby smokes too. If you smoke while you are pregnant you are more likely to have a miscarriage. Your baby is also likely to be born early, be small and sickly and get more chest infections. Smoking can make it harder for women to get pregnant.



Men's business

Smoking can make it harder for men to have families because smoking makes it harder to make sperm. Smoking can also affect the amount of blood going to the penis, so it doesn't work as well (impotence).

Borrowing others smokes

Asking friends and family for smokes may cause problems. Many people also give cigarettes to others which mean they are spending even more money on cigarettes.

Bones

Smoking makes your bones weaker so they break more easily (osteoporosis). This is a big problem when our mob get older and have been smoking for a long time.



Mental Health

Some people find smoking relaxing, but it actually causes stress and smoking over a long time can contribute to mental health problems such as anxiety and depression.

Financial Stress

Not having enough money can cause a lot of stress. Sometimes people use smoking as a way to cope. But when people spend their money on cigarettes, they have less money to pay for food, rent and other bills.



Weigh up the benefits

Everyone has the right to smoke. You just need to think about the good things and not so good things about giving up and weigh it up for yourself.

Hard things about giving up smoking

Some things to consider

I'm good until my friends come round...but when they smoke I want to as well

Some friends will continue to offer you cigarettes. You may have to avoid these friends for a couple of weeks. Friends will get used to you not smoking and respect you for your decision.

I've tried to stop before

Learn from past quit attempts. Some people find it difficult to stop smoking. If you have tried to quit before, think about what worked and what didn't work.

I really don't have the willpower

Willpower is something we need to work at. Remember why you want to stop. You're not alone, every year around half of all smokers in Australia try to give up.

I want to stop but I get sick and moody

Nicotine is a very addictive drug. You may have withdrawal symptoms. Your body will take a few weeks to recover. Nicotine patches, gum, lozenges, mouth spray and inhalers can help with withdrawal. So can medicines like Champix or Zyban, if used for at least 8-12 weeks.

I am worried about weight gain

Try to eat healthy food that includes plenty of vegetables and do some physical activity that you enjoy. A few extra kilos of weight are a smaller health risk than continuing to smoke.

I can't afford the patches and gum

Free NRT patches are available to all Aboriginal people. Ask your doctor for a script and talk about other medications available. Think about how much money you are spending now on your smokes. Quitting is cheaper AND better for you!

Good things about giving up smoking

A couple of weeks after giving up smoking I wasn't thinking about it as much

I felt healthier almost straight away

I feel in control

My kids stopped nagging me about my smokes

I have lots more money

I smell better now

Some things to consider

During withdrawal you may not be able to stop thinking about smoking. But it gets easier and after a few weeks you won't feel like you are controlled by cigarettes.

As soon as you stop smoking your risk of cancer, stroke and heart disease goes down. You will feel healthier, have more energy and find it easier to breathe. You may cough a bit more at first because your lungs are getting cleaner.

You don't have to worry about running out of smokes anymore, or being in places you can't smoke.

Your children will be happy that you are not smoking anymore. It can feel like a weight lifted off you.

The money you save adds up. You can spend this on presents for your family or yourself or pay your bills. If you spend \$100 a week on cigarettes you will save over \$5,000 each year you don't smoke.

Many ex-smokers like the fact that their clothes and breath do not smell of smoke anymore.

Who to contact in your community:



Your local contact person is: