



Smoking



The facts!

Smoking is one of the biggest killers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is the single most important risk factor for heart disease.

Smoking affects the arteries that supply blood to the heart, which can lead to heart disease, a heart attack or stroke.

Quitting smoking can be hard at first, but you can do it with planning, practice and help.

Smoking damages your health

Smoking can cause the following:

- heart disease
- stroke
- high blood pressure
- cancer (especially of the lungs, throat, bladder and lips)
- chest infections
- makes you breathless and unfit
- makes your teeth and fingers yellow
- can make mothers have small babies
- difficulty in having an erection.

Smoking can also affect the health of your family. If you are pregnant and smoke, your baby smokes too. Your kids may develop asthma or ear infections if they live in a house with smokers.





What about second-hand smoke?

Breathing other people's smoke (second-hand smoke or passive smoking) is harmful to both smokers and non-smokers. Exposure to second-hand smoke increases the risk of heart disease by about 30%.

Benefits of quitting smoking

Stopping smoking has both major and immediate health benefits for men and women of all ages. You will:

- have better health
- have more energy
- save money
- live longer
- have an improved sense of taste and smell
- create a better environment for your kids.

Tips to stop smoking

- Pick a date to stop
- Don't try to give up before stressful events (i.e. job interview, court appearance, etc.)
- Get your family to support you
- Plan for upcoming events like a party – others may be smoking and it will be hard not to smoke
- Have someone to talk to when you feel like giving up (e.g. Aboriginal Health Worker, nurse, doctor)
- Use nicotine replacement patches, gum or lozenges, or join a group for help
- Call the Quitline on 13 78 48 (cost of a local call)

It is never too late to quit!

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