

Tobacco Facts

Nationally, over 400,000 deaths are attributed to tobacco related diseases. Tobacco related diseases are the most preventable.

Approximately 24% of the population smokes – that leaves 76% who do not.

18-24 year olds have the highest rate of tobacco use – college campuses have seen a rise in the level of smoking.

In Mississippi, over 4000 deaths per year are attributed to tobacco related diseases.

The latest Surgeon General Report states that there is no safe exposure to second hand smoke. Heart disease and lung/respiratory problems are elevated in those regularly exposed to second hand smoke. Because their bodies are still developing, infants and children who are regularly exposed have more problems with respiratory and allergy conditions.

There are two kinds of environmental tobacco smoke exposure. The first is second hand smoke which is filtered through the cigarette and the lungs of the smoker before being exhaled. The second is 'sidestream smoke' which is what is coming directly off of the burning cigarette and has not been filtered at all. Both are dangerous.

Tobacco related deaths kill more than aids, car accidents, fires, suicide, homicides, alcohol, and illicit drugs combined. In the next 10 years, more people will die of tobacco related diseases than those who have died from aids since aids was discovered.

There are 4000 chemicals in tobacco – over 80 are known carcinogens. Second hand smoke also contains these 80 carcinogens – therefore even non smokers are exposed to the deadly substances with each episode.

Nicotine is the addictive agent in tobacco, not the cancer causing agent. The level of nicotine has increased in tobacco, even after the settlement where they were not supposed to make tobacco more addictive.

Carbon monoxide is elevated in the lungs of a smoker. The normal air is 1-5 ppm (parts per million), EPA starts warnings when the air is 9 ppm. A smoker exhales 25-50+ ppm which goes directly into the air or into the face of others, including children.

Smokeless tobacco is equally as dangerous. There are 4000 chemicals in tobacco – including smokeless. Pre-cancerous lesions can be seen in the mouths of adolescents who use snuff or chew regularly.

It is never too late to quit. The body will begin to improve within the first 20 minutes of quitting. Within the first 5 years of being tobacco free, your chance of cardiac illness is just slightly higher than those who have never smoked.

Smoking 1 pack a day costs an average of \$1200 per year – the cost goes up if you smoke more.

Smokers heal more slowly when injured or have surgery, they have more absenteeism due to health problems and can cost an employer an average of \$1000 in elevated insurance costs and time away from the job (either in smoking behaviors or absenteeism).

If you smoke, your children are twice as likely to smoke. If your children smoke as adolescents, they are approximately 47% more likely to experiment with illicit and illegal drugs.

If you decide to quit and get help, you are twice as likely to quit for good – calling the Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT NOW allows direct access to a qualified, trained tobacco cessation counselor to help with an individualized plan to quit.

There is no magic bullet to quitting tobacco – it is both an addiction and a strong habit. Cognitive/behavioral counseling helps in the changes of behavior and medications, such as patches, gum, mints or prescriptive medications, can also be helpful. The combination of counseling and medications make the opportunity to quit for good much higher.

Some people may have to make many attempts to quit before they quit for good. It is one of the most drastic changes that anyone goes through because tobacco use is accepted, legal and addictive.

Employers are beginning to look at the return on investment of helping current employees quit and restricting hiring to non smokers. Also, in making their grounds smoke free.

Healthcare providers are a great resource to helping people quit. Over 70% of the population sees their healthcare provider or dentists annually and listen more than to family and friends.

In any given population, 25% would be smokers, 70% of those have thought about quitting and only 20% of those are actually ready. Take advantage of any 'teachable moment' to encourage and direct someone to get help.

Healthcare providers can refer to the Tobacco Quitline with a consent/referral form. With the patients' signature, the quitline can make pro-active contact and report progress back to the referring physician.

1-800-QUIT NOW