

# More than 100 reasons to quit tobacco

Tobacco causes 8 million deaths every year. When evidence was released this year that smokers were more likely to develop severe disease with COVID-19 compared to non-smokers, it triggered millions of smokers to want to quit tobacco. Quitting can be challenging, especially with the added social and economic stress that have come as a result of the pandemic, but there are a lot of reasons to quit.

The benefits of quitting tobacco are almost immediate. After just 20 minutes of quitting smoking, your heart rate drops. Within 12 hours, the carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal. Within 2-12 weeks, your circulation improves and lung function increases. Within 1-9 months, coughing and shortness of breath decrease. Within 5-15 years, your stroke risk is reduced to that of a non-smoker. Within 10 years, your lung cancer death rate is about half that of a smoker. Within 15 years, your risk of heart disease is that of a non-smoker. If that's not enough here are a few more reasons!

1. Smokers have a greater risk of developing a severe case and dying from COVID-19.

## Tobacco affects your looks almost immediately

2. Everything stinks! From your skin, to your whole house, your clothes, and your fingers and breath.
3. Tobacco causes teeth to yellow and creates excess dental plaque.
4. Smoking tobacco and the use of smokeless tobacco cause bad breath.
5. Tobacco makes your skin wrinkly, making you look older faster. Smoking prematurely ages the skin by wearing away proteins that give the skin elasticity, depleting it of vitamin A and restricting blood flow.
6. These wrinkles are more apparent around the lips and eyes and tobacco also makes skin leathery and dry.

7. Tobacco smoking increases the risk of developing psoriasis, a noncontagious inflammatory skin condition that leaves itchy, oozing red patches all over the body.

## It threatens the health of your friends and family – not just you.

8. Over 1 million people die every year from exposure to second-hand smoke.

9. Non-smokers exposed to second-hand smoke are at risk of developing lung cancer.

10. Cigarettes remain an important cause of accidental fires and resulting deaths.

11. E-cigarettes also expose non-smokers and bystanders to nicotine and other harmful chemicals.

12. Being exposed to second-hand smoke may increase the risk of progression from tuberculosis infection to active disease.

13. Being exposed to second-hand smoke is associated with type 2 diabetes.

## Smoking or using e-cigarettes around children compromises their health and safety

14. Smokers' children suffer reduced lung function, which continues to affect them in the form of chronic respiratory disorders in adulthood.

15. Exposure of children to e-cigarette liquid continues to pose serious risks. There is a risk of the devices leaking, or of children swallowing the liquid.

16. E-cigarettes have been known to cause serious injuries, including burns, through fires and explosions.

17. School-aged children exposed to the harmful effects of second-hand smoke are also at risk for asthma through inflammation of the airways to the lungs.

18. Children under 2 years of age who are exposed to second-hand smoke in the home could get middle-ear disease possibly leading to hearing loss and deafness.

19. Quitting smoking decreases the risk of many diseases related to second-hand smoke in children, such as respiratory diseases (e.g., asthma) and ear infections.

## Tobacco use has negative social consequences

20. You want to be a good example for your kids, friends, and loved ones.

21. Tobacco use can affect social interactions and relationships negatively.

22. Quitting means there are no restrictions on where you can go – you can mingle socially, without feeling isolated or having to go outside to smoke.

23. Quitting can make you more productive – you won't have to stop what you are doing to have a smoke all the time.

## It's expensive - you could be spending your money on more important things

24. One study found that smokers burn through an average of \$1.4 million in personal costs, includes spending on cigarettes, medical costs and lower wages brought on by smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke.

25. Tobacco use affects the health and productivity of workers making them prone to missed days at work.

26. Tobacco use contributes to poverty by diverting household spending from basic needs such as food and shelter to tobacco.

27. Tobacco use burdens the global economy with an estimated US\$ 1.4 trillion in healthcare costs for treating the diseases caused by tobacco and lost human capital from tobacco-attributable sickness and death.

## Smoking reduces your fertility

28. Smokers are more likely to experience infertility. Quitting smoking reduces difficulty getting pregnant, having premature births, babies with low birth weights and miscarriage.

29. Smoking can cause erectile dysfunction. Smoking restricts blood flow to the penis creating an inability to achieve an erection. Erectile dysfunction is more common in smokers and very likely to persist or become permanent unless the man stops smoking early in life.

30. Smoking also diminishes sperm count, motility and shape of the sperm in men.

## All forms of tobacco are deadly

31. Every year, over 8 million people die from tobacco.

32. Tobacco kills half of its users. Use of tobacco in any form robs you of your health and causes debilitating diseases.

33. Smoking shisha is just as harmful as other forms of tobacco use.

34. Chewing tobacco can cause mouth cancer, tooth loss, brown teeth, white patches and gum disease.

35. The nicotine in smokeless tobacco is more easily absorbed than by smoking cigarettes enhancing its addictiveness.

## When you buy tobacco, you are financially supporting an industry that exploits farmers and children and pedals sickness and death.

36. Tobacco growers are exposed to ill health by nicotine that is absorbed through the skin, as well as exposure to heavy pesticides and exposure to tobacco dust.

37. In some countries, children are employed in tobacco farming, which impacts not only their health, but also their ability to attend school.

38. Tobacco use can worsen poverty since tobacco users are at much higher risk of falling ill and dying prematurely of cancers, heart attacks, respiratory diseases or other tobacco-related diseases, depriving families of much-needed income and imposing additional costs for health care.

39. The vast majority employed in the overall tobacco sector earn very little, while the big tobacco companies reap enormous profits.

## Heated tobacco products are harmful to health

40. Heated tobacco products (HTPs) expose users to toxic emissions many of which can cause cancer.

41. Heated tobacco products are themselves tobacco products, therefore, switching from conventional tobacco products to HTPs does not equal quitting.

42. There is insufficient evidence to support the claim that heated tobacco products (HTPs) are less harmful relative to conventional cigarettes.

## E-cigarettes are harmful to health and not safe

### **The secret is out: The tobacco industry targets the vulnerable**

43. Children and adolescents who use e-cigarettes at least double their chance of smoking cigarettes later in life.

44. E-cigarette use increases your risk of heart disease and lung disorders.

45. Nicotine in e-cigarettes is a highly addictive drug that can damage children's developing brains.

## Tobacco use, particularly smoking, takes your breath away

46. Tobacco use is responsible for 25% of all cancer deaths globally.

47. Smokers are up to 22 times more likely to develop lung cancer in their lifetime than non-smokers. Tobacco smoking is the primary cause of lung cancer, causing over two thirds of lung cancer deaths globally.

48. One in five tobacco smokers will develop chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) in their lifetime, especially people who start smoking during their childhood and teenage years, since tobacco smoke significantly slows lung growth and development.

49. Smoking can exacerbate asthma in adults, restricting their activity, contributing to disability and increasing the risk of severe asthma attacks requiring emergency care.

50. Tobacco smoking more than doubles the risk of transforming tuberculosis from a latent state to an active state, and is also known to worsen the natural progression of the disease. About one quarter of the world's population has latent tuberculosis.

## Tobacco breaks hearts

51. Just a few cigarettes a day, occasional smoking, or exposure to second-hand smoke increase the risk of heart disease.

52. Tobacco smokers have up to twice the risk of stroke and a fourfold increased risk of heart disease.

53. Tobacco smoke damages the arteries of the heart, causing the build-up of plaque and development of blood clots, thereby restricting blood flow and eventually leading to heart attacks and strokes.

54. Use of nicotine and tobacco products increases the risk of cardiovascular disease.

## Tobacco causes over 20 types of cancer

55. Smoking and smokeless tobacco use cause oral cancer, cancers of the lips, throat (pharynx and larynx) and oesophagus.

56. Surgical removal of the cancerous larynx can lead to the need for tracheostomy, the creation of a hole in the neck and windpipe that allows the patient to breathe.

57. Smokers are at a significantly higher risk of developing acute myeloid leukaemia; cancer of the nasal and paranasal sinus cavities; colorectal, kidney, liver, pancreatic, stomach or ovarian cancer; and cancer of the lower urinary tract (including the bladder, ureter and renal pelvis).

58. Some studies have also demonstrated a link between tobacco smoking and an increased risk of breast cancer, particularly among heavy smokers and women who start smoking before their first pregnancy.

59. Smoking is also known to increase the risk of cervical cancer in women infected with human papillomavirus.

## Smokers are more likely to lose their vision and hearing

60. Smoking causes many eye diseases which, if left untreated, can lead to permanent vision loss.

61. Smokers are more likely than non-smokers to develop age-related macular degeneration, a condition that results in irreversible vision loss.

62. Smokers also have a higher risk of cataracts, a clouding of the eye's lens that blocks light. Cataracts cause vision impairment, and surgery is the only option to restore vision.

63. Some evidence suggests that smoking also causes glaucoma, a condition that increases pressure in the eye and can damage eyesight.

64. Adult smokers are more likely to suffer hearing loss.

## Tobacco harms almost every organ of the body

65. Lifelong tobacco smokers lose at least 10 years of life on average.
66. With every puff of a cigarette, toxins and carcinogens are delivered to the body, at least 70 of the chemicals are known to cause cancer.
67. The risk of developing diabetes is higher in smokers.
68. Smoking is a risk factor for dementia, a group of disorders that result in mental decline.
69. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia, and an estimated 14% of Alzheimer's cases globally can be attributed to smoking.
70. Women who smoke are more likely to experience painful menstruation and more severe menopausal symptoms.
71. Menopause occurs 1–4 years earlier in female smokers because smoking reduces the production of eggs in the ovaries, resulting in a loss of reproductive function and subsequent low estrogen levels.
72. Tobacco smoke reduces the delivery of oxygen to the body's tissues.
73. Tobacco use restricts blood flow which, if left untreated, can lead to gangrene (death of body tissue) and amputation of affected areas.
74. Tobacco use increases the risk of periodontal disease, a chronic inflammatory disease that wears away at the gums and destroys the jawbone, leading to tooth loss.
75. Tobacco smokers are at significantly higher risk than non-smokers for post-surgical complications.
76. Tobacco smokers are harder to wean off mechanical ventilation. This often lengthens their intensive care unit (ICU) and overall hospital stay, potentially exposing them to other infection.

77. Smokers are likely to experience gastrointestinal disorders, such as stomach ulcers, inflammatory bowel disease, associated with abdominal cramps, persistent diarrhea, fever and rectal bleeding, and cancers of the gastrointestinal tract.

78. Smokers are more likely to lose bone density, fracture more easily and experience serious complications, such as delayed healing or failure to heal.

79. Components of tobacco smoke weaken the immune system, putting smokers at risk of pulmonary infections.

80. Smokers with a genetic predisposition to autoimmune disorders are at an increased risk of several diseases, including rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn's disease, bacterial meningitis, postsurgical infection, and cancers.

81. Smoking also puts immune-compromised individuals, such as those living with cystic fibrosis, multiple sclerosis or cancer, at a higher risk of disease-related comorbidities and premature death.

82. The immunosuppressive effects of tobacco put people living with HIV at an increased risk of developing AIDS. Among HIV-positive smokers, the average length of life lost is 12.3 years, more than double the number of years lost by HIV-positive non-smokers.

## Tobacco and nicotine use harm your baby

83. Tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke during pregnancy increase the risk for fetal death.

84. Women who smoke or are exposed to second-hand smoke during pregnancy are at an increased risk of miscarriage.

85. Stillbirths (the delivery of fetuses that have died in the womb) are also more common owing to fetal oxygen deprivation and placental abnormalities induced by carbon monoxide in tobacco smoke and by nicotine in tobacco smoke and smokeless tobacco.

86. Smokers are at higher risk of ectopic pregnancy, a potentially fatal complication for the mother in which the fertilized egg attaches outside the uterus.

87. Smoking cessation and protection from exposure to second-hand smoke are especially important for women of reproductive age planning to become pregnant and during pregnancy.

88. E-cigarettes pose significant risks to pregnant women who use them, as they can damage the growing fetus.

89. Infants born to women who smoke, use smokeless tobacco, or are exposed to second-hand smoke during pregnancy have a higher risk of preterm birth and low birthweight.

## Tobacco pollutes the environment

90. Governments and local authorities pay to clean up tobacco waste, not the tobacco companies themselves. Quit tobacco to protect the environment.

91. Cigarette butts are among the most commonly discarded piece of waste globally and are the most frequent item of litter picked up on beaches and water edges worldwide.

92. Hazardous substances have been identified in cigarette butts – including arsenic, lead, nicotine and formaldehyde. These substances are leached from discarded butts into aquatic environments and soil.

93. Tobacco smoke can measurably contribute to air pollution levels in a city.

94. Most cigarettes are lit using matches or gas-filled lighters. If, for example, one wooden match is used to light two cigarettes, the six trillion cigarettes smoked globally each year would require the destruction of about nine million trees to produce three trillion matches.

95. E-cigarettes and heated tobacco products may contain batteries that require special disposal as well as chemicals, packaging and other non-biodegradable materials.

96. Currently, the majority of plastic e-cigarette liquid cartridges are not reusable or recyclable – transnational companies tend to sell disposable ones, presumably to boost sales via repeat customers.

97. Tobacco production emissions are estimated to equate 3 million transatlantic flights.

98. Tobacco smoke contains three kinds of greenhouse gases: carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxides and pollutes indoor and outdoor environments.

99. Worldwide, approximately 200 000 hectares are for tobacco agriculture and curing each year.

100. Deforestation for tobacco growing has many serious environmental consequences – including loss of biodiversity, soil erosion and degradation, water pollution and increases in atmospheric carbon dioxide.

101. Tobacco growing usually involves substantial use of chemicals – including pesticides, fertilizers and growth regulators. These chemicals may affect drinking water sources as a result of run-off from tobacco growing areas.

102. For every 300 cigarettes produced (roughly 1.5 cartons), one tree is required to cure the tobacco leaf alone.

103. With 6 trillion cigarettes manufactured annually, about 300 billion packages (assuming 20 cigarettes per pack) are made for tobacco products. Assuming each empty pack weighs about six grams, this amounts to about 1 800 000 tonnes of packaging waste, composed of paper, ink, cellophane, foil and glue. The waste from cartons and boxes used for distribution and packing brings the total annual solid post-consumption waste to at least 2 000 000 tonnes.