

One other fact about smoking that no one argues about much any more is this: It's the leading preventable cause of death and disease in the world today.

But just *knowing* that and knowing about smoking's health risks isn't enough. You have to *act* on what you know if you want to avoid volunteering for the kind of catastrophe that smoking can cause.



So what do you do, exactly? If *you* smoke, quit. Period. End of discussion. Everybody stops smoking sooner or later, anyway.

If quitting sounds tough, it can be. If it sounds impossible, you're only kidding yourself—or underestimating your own resilience and willpower.

If you don't smoke, don't start. From all that we know about smoking today, choosing not to smoke is one of the best single choices any of us can ever make to protect our health and well-being.

It's one area of our lives where we really *do* have total control, where we *choose* whether we stay healthy or not. And it's a choice that's worth careful thought.

Because smoking really *is* a dying habit.

And too many smokers have had to learn that in the hardest way possible. ■

■ **deadends**



This is one in a series of publications on drugs, behavior, and health published by Do It Now Foundation. Please write or call for a list of titles, or visit our web site at www.doitnow.org.



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Smoking kills



▶ **new bad news from nicotineland**

a do it now foundation publication by lisa turney

Smoking has always been a dying habit. That isn't news. What *is* news is that the industry that grew up around smoking is finally getting a taste of its own medicine, and things are starting to look terminal.

Let's consider some recent symptoms. Just don't get too close to the patient; he's coughing up blood already:

■ In July, 2000, a Florida jury stunned the tobacco industry with the most-costly judgment in U.S. legal history—a punitive-damages bill totalling \$144.8 billion—for knowingly selling a deadly, defective product to the American public and lying about it for decades.

■ In 1998, the tobacco industry *voluntarily* agreed to the biggest *civil* settlement in U.S. history, promising to pay \$206 billion over 25 years for the health costs of smokers. This came in the wake of a \$40 billion deal with four other states, conceding liability in the deaths and illness of millions of smokers.



No longer targets. Cigarette makers have agreed to stop aiming ads at young people and to finance anti-smoking ads.

■ Topping off that deal, the industry even agreed to spend \$1.7 billion for anti-smoking ads and to stop youth-oriented marketing, including the use of cartoon characters. (*Rest in peace, Joe Camel.*)

Still, while the prognosis is bleak for smoking, long-term, in the short-term, the patient is still alive and kicking—everyone who gets in the way. Just consider:

- ▶ 46.2 million American adults still smoke.
- ▶ 4 of 5 smokers say they want to quit—but when they try, 80 percent light up again within a year.
- ▶ At least 1,100 U.S. deaths *a day* are caused by smoking—and the rate is still climbing.

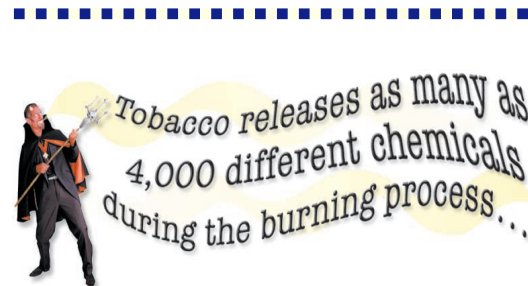
That's why we're inviting you to take a little time now to look closely at smoking.

We think if you *really* understand what happens when you smoke, you won't find it that hard to stop.

■ **going, going**



Devil to pay. Maybe he doesn't actually make anyone start, but most smokers have a devil of a time when they try to stop.



And if you're not already a smoker, you'll find it a lot easier to stay that way.

When you talk tobacco, two words—tar and nicotine—scream back. They're the best-known (and best-studied) chemicals in *Nicotiana tabacum*.

A main reason why is that there's simply so *much* of them in there. Cigarette smoke contains .06-2.5 mg of nicotine and .5-35 mg of tar. Cigars contain even more—up to 120 mg of nicotine (enough to kill you, if you choked it all down at once)—while smokeless tobacco weighs in at around 6.9-14.4 mg.

But that's not all that's there. Tobacco also contains hundreds of other chemicals, and releases as many as 4,000 when it burns.

That might *seem* like enough weird chemistry experiments to satisfy most people, but cigarette companies add more—in the form of menthol and other flavorings to enhance taste and “smokeability.”

Flavoring aside, the tar, nicotine, and other gunk in a cigarette race to the lungs within nanoseconds of a smoker's first drag. There, the nicotine and other chemical byproducts (like carbon monoxide and formaldehyde) mix with oxygen, move into the bloodstream, and head straight for the brain. And it's in the brain where things

■ **tobacco talk**

get even stickier, still.

In the brain, tobacco's main drug effects kick in. And they all center on nicotine, tobacco's main mood-altering chemical.

Like caffeine, nicotine is a stimulant that speeds up the flow of chemical signals in the brain. It also acts on the heart and other body systems, raising blood pressure and heart rate, reducing pain response and stress levels, and cutting appetite.

Nicotine also raises *metabolism*—the rate at which the body burns off energy. That's one reason smokers tend to weigh less than non-smokers.

Then again, it's also the reason their skin wrinkles so quickly.

But that's not all that nicotine does. And what it probably does best is create a need for itself in the body (and mind) of a smoker.

Mark Twain probably put it best when he said that quitting smoking is easy: He'd done it hundreds of times.

bodytalk

▶ **a**ny smoker can tell you that quitting's tough. And most who quit at quitting usually blame their "nerves" when they throw in the towel.

The good news about **that** bad news is that there are dozens of ways to de-stress (and decompress) without cigarettes. Here are a few:

▶ **Substitute!** Pop a carrot or celery stick (or a piece of nicotine gum) when the urge hits.

▶ **Get wet!** It's a good idea to drink lots of H2O, anyway, and water can help reduce the hunger that quitting can sometimes unleash.

▶ **Stay busy!** Take a walk after dinner instead of lighting up. Even busy work can keep your head and hands focused on something other than cigarettes.

▶ **Breathe!** Just taking a deep breath and exhaling slowly can lessen tension.

Actually, what you do isn't as important as simply doing *something* and doing it for as long as it takes to get de-stressed—and away from the urge to light up.

Remember: The impulse to smoke will pass, but so will your good intentions unless you help them along. ■



chill factors

He wasn't alone. Most smokers *do* try to quit—usually more than once.

One reason so many fail is that smoking is a learned behavior. And external "cues"—drinking a cup of coffee, for example, or racing to meet a deadline—can trigger associations that kick off a craving for cigarettes.

But the thing that turns the craving into a compulsion is nicotine, a drug that the U.S. Surgeon General has described as addictive as heroin or cocaine.

Like those drugs, nicotine boosts mood by altering the balance of neurotransmitters in the brain that regulate attention and arousal.

And just like its heavy-hitting chemical cousins, nicotine triggers a full-blown withdrawal syndrome when an addicted user stops using.

And while some of the symptoms of cold-turkey tobacco withdrawal—jangled nerves, depression, and irritability—are so common that they're joked about, they're not funny to many would-be ex-smokers.

Maybe that's why, like Mark Twain, they keep giving themselves the chance to quit all over again.



Ash to ashes. This year alone, smoking will cause at least 430,000 U.S. deaths.

the alternative to quitting is really no alternative at all. Because it centers on a list of diseases *no one* wants.

And even though most smokers think (or, at least, *hope*) serious problems won't happen to them, the numbers tell a different story:

- Smokers die an average of 9.78 years earlier than non-smokers.
- 160,000 Americans will die of smoking-related lung cancer this year alone.
- 30 percent of all heart disease deaths are directly linked to smoking.

Others suffer emphysema, chronic bronchitis, pneumonia, and a range of other problems.

smokinggun



Passive smoking — inhaling smoke from other people's cigarettes — causes about 55,000 deaths every year in the United States.



Smoking even affects the sexes differently.

It can be a factor in impotence among middle-aged men, and women smokers who take the Pill face almost twice the heart disease risk. Maternal smoking is also a frequent cause of fetal miscarriage and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, or "crib death."

Additives add *more* problems. A recent study of esophageal cancer tied higher levels of the disease among African-Americans to their higher consumption of menthol cigarettes.

And contrary to their image, low-tar brands aren't "safer" than ordinary cigarettes. In fact, a November, 2001 study by the National Cancer Institute showed that smokers just smoke more to make up for lost nicotine.

And that brings us to one of the hottest hot-button issues in the current debate over smoking: Passive inhalation by nonsmokers of "sidestream" smoke.

They say where there's smoke there's fire, and in the case of passive smoking, there's plenty of both—and plenty of evidence to confirm some of the worst fears of nonsmokers and researchers alike.

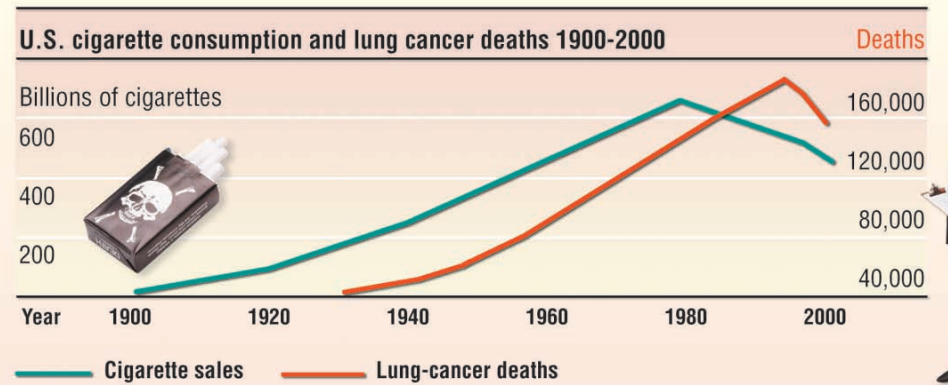
In fact, the American Heart Association, American Lung Association, and American Cancer Society estimate that passive smoking figures into as many as 55,000 U.S. deaths each year and raises the risk of cancer and other diseases among children, co-workers, friends, and spouses of smokers.

The risk is so great, in fact, that the Environmental Protection Agency has declared sidestream smoke a "Class A" carcinogen, and backed it up with new restrictions on workplace smoking.

It isn't just someone's opinion any more—it's a fact. And it's such a big fact that not even Big Tobacco and its high-priced lawyers argue about it much any more.

▶ Smoke and Numbers: The Cancer Connection

Source: USDA, American Cancer Society, National Center for Health Statistics



Smoking's wake. Maybe the tobacco industry *pretended* the issue was in doubt, but the link between smoking and lung cancer was clear for decades. The only real question that remains: How many more still have to die?