Facts about smoking

In Australia 14,901[1] deaths per year are caused by regular long-term tobacco smoking. Some of the diseases caused by smoking include lung cancer, bronchitis, heart disease and strokes.

Smoking kills

Smoking kills more people in Australia than all the people killed by alcohol, other drugs, murder, suicide, road crashes, rail crashes, air crashes, poisoning, drowning, fires, falls, lightning, electrocution, snakes, spiders and sharks.

Who does not smoke?

'**Approximately 80% of South Australian adults don't smoke**. The majority of young people also choose to be smoke-free. In fact more than **95.4% of 12-15** year olds are smoke free and **76.6% of 15-29** year olds are smoke-free!'

People who start smoking in their teen years are more likely to become regular smokers, smoke more heavily, have difficulties quitting and are at greater risk of getting smoking-related diseases.

The majority of adult smokers say they wish they had never started and that they would like to stop.
In fact, around 80% of Australian smokers have made attempts to quit.

Second hand smoking

Second hand smoking is when a person breathes another person's tobacco smoke. Sometimes referred to as passive smoke, it can be the smoke that the smoker breathes out (exhaled mainstream smoke) or the smoke from the end of the cigarette (sidestream smoke). Second hand smoking causes smelly clothes and hair, sore and/or watery eyes, sneezing and coughing, ear infections, slower lung growth and can trigger asthma attacks. It has also been linked to cot death.

Addiction to cigarette smoking

Nicotine is the addictive drug in tobacco. New smokers often feel dizzy and sick from tobacco smoke, but some get used to its effects. As they continue to smoke, their bodies learn to depend on nicotine and they can tolerate smoking more and more. When smokers stop they may get cravings and feel anxious, hungry, irritable and find it hard to focus on what they are doing. Social and emotional factors also contribute to someone becoming addicted to smoking. For example, people may feel they need to smoke when they are at a party, when they are with certain friends or feeling stressed or bored.[2]

Research shows that people do not need to smoke many cigarettes to become addicted to smoking. Young people can be at risk of becoming addicted to smoking even if they only smoke occasionally, such as at parties or on holidays.

Someone who is addicted to smoking may find it difficult to stop or cut down. They may crave cigarettes and experience withdrawal symptoms as their body adjusts to not having nicotine. Getting help with quitting will give smokers a much better chance of success. They can:

- visit their doctor for advice on quitting methods or products
- get support from family or friends
- call the Quitline 13 QUIT (13 7848)
- visit www.quitsa.org.au

References

[1] 'Collins DJ, Lapsley HM. The costs of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drug abuse to Australian society in 2004/05. Canberra: Department of Health and Ageing; 2008. Monograph Series no.64.'

General Information source: quitsa.org.au

Government of South Australia
SA Health
Heart Foundation
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Quit SA
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