

THE TRUE ROLE OF NICOTINE IN SMOKING

Cigarettes – and that's all of them, even so-called light or low tar brands – contain over 4,000 chemicals, including at least 60 that can increase your risk of cancer. They also contain nicotine, which isn't thought to cause cancer itself, but is the reason why you crave a cigarette in the first place.

You see, when you smoke, your brain grows more receptors that thrive on nicotine. Then, when you quit, these receptors no longer get the nicotine they need – and that's what causes the cravings.

It may surprise you to know that nicotine can actually help you to stop smoking. Therapeutic nicotine, which is in NiQuitin products can double your chances of quitting, compared to relying on willpower alone. This is because it gives your body the nicotine it craves with none of the cancer-causing smoke. Then you step down the dosage gradually as your need for nicotine lessens – until ultimately you don't need it any more.

THE EFFECTS OF SMOKING

YOUR SKIN, HANDS, TEETH - AND THE WORLD AROUND YOU

As an adult smoker, you can find yourself with:

- Wrinkles around your eyes and mouth – smokers' skin can be prematurely aged by up to 20 years
- Skin that has been dried out by tobacco smoke and starved of oxygen and nutrients, as smoking restricts your blood vessels and reduces the flow of blood to your skin
- Tobacco-stained fingers
- Yellowish brown teeth, gum disease and bad breath
- A wardrobe, house and car that permanently smell of smoke

YOUR SEX LIFE AND HEALTH

Men who smoke are more likely to suffer impotence and loss of stamina. Overall, smoking increases the risk of impotence by about 50% for men in their 30s and 40s.

For women, smoking can reduce fertility. In one study, smokers were more than three times more likely to take over a year to conceive, and it was estimated that smoking women were only 72% as fertile as non-smokers.

YOUR HEART AND CIRCULATORY SYSTEM

Smokers are two to three times more prone to heart attacks than non-smokers, and much more likely to suffer from strokes, blood clots and angina – and die from heart disease.

YOUR LUNGS

Tobacco smoking is responsible for nearly all cases of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. That includes diseases like emphysema and chronic bronchitis, which leave sufferers breathless and unable to do many activities.

90% of primary lung cancers are caused by smoking. It's the biggest cancer killer in the UK and nearly one in four smokers who die prematurely die of lung cancer. Your lungs are damaged not just by the number of cigarettes you smoke, but by the number of years you've been a smoker. So the sooner you stop, the better.

OTHER TYPES OF CANCER

As a smoker, you increase your risk of cancers of the mouth, bladder, kidneys, pancreas, stomach, liver, colon and cervix, as well as the risk of developing leukaemia.

DIABETES

If you smoke, your risk of developing Type 2 (adult onset) diabetes is two to three times higher than if you don't. And if you do develop it, smoking also significantly increases your risk of complications and death.

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YOUR WEIGHT

Many smokers are afraid of quitting because they think as soon as they stop smoking they'll put on weight. The truth is, whilst smoking does suppress the appetite it also deadens the taste buds, stopping you from enjoying your food.

For more advice and tips on controlling your weight whilst quitting smoking, visit www.niquitin.co.uk.

SMOKING AND PREGNANCY

Babies whose mothers smoked during pregnancy are twice as prone to sudden infant death syndrome or cot death. They're more likely to be underweight and at risk of chest diseases. Having parents who smoke is associated with reduced growth in children and poorer development in reading and maths up to the age of 16 or beyond.

THE EFFECTS OF SMOKING ON YOUR CHILDREN

If both their parents smoke, your kids are nearly four times more likely to become teenage smokers themselves compared to their friends whose parents have never smoked.

What's more, children who are frequently exposed to cigarette smoke are at increased risk of developing asthma, respiratory disease, sudden infant death syndrome (cot death) and chest infections.

ONCE YOU'VE HAD YOUR LAST CIGARETTE

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You'll be amazed how quickly you see the difference:

- **After 20 mins** Your blood pressure and pulse should return to normal. Circulation improves, especially to hands and feet.
- **After 8 hrs** Blood oxygen levels increase to normal and your chances of having a heart attack start to fall.
- **After 24 hrs** Carbon monoxide leaves the body. The lungs start to clear out mucus and debris.
- **After 48 hrs** Your senses of taste and smell begin to improve.
- **After 3 days** Breathing is easier and your energy levels increase.
- **2-12 wks** Circulation improves throughout the body. Walking and exercise get easier.
- **3-9 mths** Breathing problems, coughing, shortness of breath and wheezing improve. Lung efficiency will have increased by 5-10%.
- **After 5 yrs** Risk of having a heart attack falls to about half that of a smoker.
- **After 10 yrs** Risk of lung cancer falls to around half that of a smoker. Risk of a heart attack falls to about the same as someone who has never smoked.

Plus:

You'll look better

Once you've stopped your skin should start to look brighter and younger than if you had continued to smoke. That's because the levels of oxygen in your body will return to normal and your circulation will improve. You'll slow the formation of wrinkles around your mouth and eyes, and your eyes themselves will probably look brighter. The staining on your teeth and fingers will stop and your breath, hair, clothes and home will all smell better.

You'll feel better

You'll soon start to reap the rewards. Food will taste better. Smells will be more intense. You'll have more energy and you'll breathe more easily.

You'll save money

Do you know exactly how much you spend on cigarettes? If you smoke 20 a day, you'll save around £40 per month. Why not start thinking about what you'll do with all the extra money.