

Once you have taken these steps, it is time to decide on a date when you wish to stop. It could be your birthday, a memorable date, a holy date or just the start of the New Year. Remember, determination and perseverance is key, so be prepared to experience cravings for a smoke; the only way to stop is have the will power to combat this effectively.

Practical tips

Here are some tips to stopping smoking effectively and easily.

1. Start with a friend – If you have a friend or family member who is looking to stop smoking, join up with them and start the journey together. It is good to have someone who will motivate you and who you trust to take this path with you.

2. Have a plan – Using nicotine replacement products such as patches and gum have helped a number of patients, and it is worthwhile trying it yourself. Make sure you visit your doctor to ensure you get the right dose of replacement therapy.

3. Keep occupied – Make sure that you are always doing something to keep you occupied and to keep your mind of cigarettes. Regular exercise is useful.

4. Enjoy it! – Use the money you save to treat yourself to something nice!

Conclusion

Tobacco smoke is harmful and is the primary cause for heart disease. Make sure the cigarette that you are smoking is the last, and do your best to quit today to lead a long and healthy life.

For more information on the effects of smoking and heart disease, visit our website at www.baligadiagnostics.com.

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Smoking And Heart Disease



Free information leaflet on the harmful effects of smoking and how you can stop smoking today.

- How it damages the heart
- Second hand smoke
- Why should I quit?
- Tips to stop smoking

Part of free patient information series by



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Introduction

Smoking is an important public health problem with millions of people all across the globe practising the habit. It is well recognised as a significant risk factor for heart disease. Studies have shown that smokers are twice as likely to develop a heart attack when compared to people who do not smoke. Most patients who suffer from a heart attack under the age of 50 years are often smokers.

Stopping smoking has been consistently shown to reduce the chances of developing heart disease and heart attacks. If you are still smoking, now is the time to give up – it is never too late!

How smoking damages the heart

Smoking nicotine containing products such as cigarettes, cigars and beedi's can have damaging effects on the entire cardiovascular system. This includes the heart and the blood vessels. Patients are therefore at a higher risk of developing a heart attack or a stroke.

Below are some of the changes that can occur in the cardiovascular system as a result of smoking.

1. Atherosclerosis – This is a process of deposition of fat (cholesterol) onto the inner surface of the arteries, leading to them becoming narrowed. Smoke contains damaging free radicals and oxidant molecules that can react with the lining of the blood vessel wall, resulting in damage. Fat cells deposit on this damaged area along with blood cells (platelets) and muscle tissue. This phenomenon is called

atherosclerosis, and results in a reduction in the supply of blood to the heart. This results in a heart attack.

2. Decrease in oxygen – Cigarette smoke contains carbon monoxide – a gas that can replace the oxygen in the blood, thus reducing the amount of oxygen that reaches the heart muscle and other vital tissues. As a result, the heart needs to pump a lot harder than usual to meet the oxygen demand of other organs. This can lead to the heart becoming weak as it can get tired.

3. Increased adrenaline – Nicotine that is present in tobacco acts by increasing adrenaline levels in the blood. This is known to stimulate the heart muscle and increase the heart rate when it is not needed. This can put too much stress on the heart muscle and can cause damage.

4. Thickens the blood – Smoking can make the blood thicker. This is harmful as it can make the blood clot within the arteries, resulting in a heart attack or stroke.

Other tobacco products

Other than just cigarettes, other tobacco products such as chewing tobacco and shisha are also harmful. These are associated with the development of mouth cancer, throat cancer and even cancer of the esophagus (food pipe). Shisha contains extremely high levels of toxins and is considered to be equivalent of smoking 10 packs of cigarettes in a single go! Beedis are not an alternative to cigarettes; in fact they are a lot more harmful as they do not have filters that can get rid of some of the toxins.

Second hand (Passive) smoke

Second hand smoke refers to the smoke that is inhaled when a person nearby or a family member at home smokes. While it may seem that the amount of smoke that is inhaled is small, it has been shown from research studies that this too can cause heart disease and damage to the heart muscle.

Why you should quit

It is clear that tobacco smoking is harmful to the heart, and can cause some serious damage. Studies have shown that stopping smoking can start to reverse this process within 24 hours. While the damage that has been done cannot be undone, further damage can be prevented by stopping smoking. Patients can live a completely normal and healthy life once they stop.

In addition, stopping smoking can also reduce the chances of developing other diseases such as lung disease and cancer.

Stopping smoking can also help you save money! Cigarettes and other tobacco products are not cheap, and stopping smoking can help you save thousands of rupees every year!

Taking the first step

The first step to stopping smoking is recognising that smoking is harmful to your health and can increase the chance of you dying at a young age. Just doing this means you are on your way to stopping. The next thing you need to do is to tell yourself that you are quitting and never going back whatever the circumstance.