

Tobacco



Is what
you know about
smoking
wrong?

The 2010 Surgeon General's Report reveals new facts about smoking. Some may surprise you. This new research shows how tobacco smoke causes disease and addiction. Maybe it will change what you think about smoking.

Myth 1

Smoking is just a choice.

- The first time? Yes. After just a few cigarettes? No.
- Addiction to nicotine can happen quickly. It changes the chemical balance in your brain. Smoking may seem like it's just a choice or a habit. In fact, most people who use tobacco are addicted.
- Breaking nicotine addiction is harder for some people than others. Quitting can take several tries. But don't give up.
- If you need help to quit, ask your doctor about nicotine replacement, medicines, or coaching.

Myth 2

Filters make cigarettes safer.

- Filters do not protect you. They are designed to make smoke particles smaller. That makes nicotine easier to absorb. This increases addiction.
- Cigarettes have been engineered to speed up nicotine's path to your brain. Their design feeds addiction.
- Light or low-tar cigarettes may sound less dangerous. They aren't. These misleading labels are no longer allowed.
- No cigarette is safe. Tobacco smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals. At least 250 are toxic.

Myth 3

An occasional cigarette is no big deal.

- Smoking doesn't just cause diseases for heavy smokers or longtime smokers.
- The 2010 Surgeon General's Report shows how breathing tobacco smoke can cause immediate harm. Tobacco smoke can trigger sudden heart attacks and death, even in nonsmokers.
- Each cigarette you smoke hurts your lungs, your blood vessels, and cells throughout your body.
- Smoking a few cigarettes a week can cause a heart attack.
- Cutting back is not enough to protect you. You have to quit entirely.

Myth

4

It's too late to quit—the damage is already done.

- It's true that the longer you use tobacco, the more you hurt your body. But at any age, the sooner you quit, the sooner your health can improve.
- The 2010 Surgeon General's Report shows how using tobacco causes disease almost everywhere in your body.
- Within 20 minutes after quitting, your body starts to heal.
- After 2 to 5 years, your risk for stroke is similar to that of a nonsmoker.
- In 10 years, your lung cancer risk is cut in half.

Myth

5

Secondhand smoke may bother people, but it isn't dangerous.

- Tens of thousands of nonsmokers die every year from breathing others' secondhand smoke.
- Breathing the chemicals in tobacco smoke changes your blood's chemistry almost immediately. Deadly clots can form and block arteries to your heart or brain.
- When you smoke at work, home, or at a restaurant, everyone there breathes poisons.
- If you smoke in your car, rolling down a window does not protect your passengers.
- It is not healthy to breathe any amount of tobacco smoke.

Myth

6

The little bit of smoke that my kids get doesn't hurt them.

- Don't smoke or let others smoke around your children. They can get bronchitis, pneumonia, and ear infections from smoke.
- Even if you only smoke by an open window, some of the smoke stays in your house and poisons the air your children breathe.
- Children with asthma can have a serious, even deadly, asthma attack from breathing secondhand smoke.
- The best way to protect children is to quit smoking. If you or someone else in your household are not ready to quit, be sure to make your home and car 100% smoke-free.

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Stop kidding yourself.

FACT: Quitting smoking may be the most important step you take to save your life. Talk to your doctor or call a quitline for help now.

You can get **FREE** help at
1-800-QUIT-NOW
(1-800-784-8669)

Get the **RIGHT** answers for how you can quit.

Go to
www.smokefree.gov
for information on quitting.



**Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention**
National Center for Chronic
Disease Prevention and
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