

## Fast Facts about Cigarette Smoking - Fact Sheet for Peer Counselors

### What's in Cigarettes?

Cigarettes contain over 4000 chemicals, including:

- Formaldehyde - used to preserve dead body parts for autopsies
- Cyanide - found in rat poison
- Carbon Monoxide - found in car exhaust

Nicotine reaches the brain within 10 seconds after taking the first puff of a cigarette, and is the chemical in cigarettes that causes addiction. A study of teens shows that while 5% of high school seniors who smoke believe they will still be smoking in 2 years after graduation, 75% continue to smoke eight years later.

**Conclusion:** Smoking cigarettes creates a powerful addiction that becomes hard to break.

### Smoking causes the following symptoms:

- Shortness of breath; Phlegm and mucous
- Increased susceptibility to colds and respiratory viruses
- Yellowed fingernails and teeth, wrinkled skin, and smelly clothes

### Smoking increases risk for the following diseases:

- Certain Cancers - including cancers of the lung, larynx, oral cavity, bladder, kidney, pancreas, stomach & cervix. Tobacco use contributes to 35% of all cancers (excluding skin).
- Heart disease - tobacco use contributes to 20% of all heart disease.
- Stroke - tobacco use contributes to 20% of all strokes.
- Peptic Ulcer Disease
- Bronchitis and Respiratory Infections
- Poor pregnancy outcomes and low birth weight babies; Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

**Conclusion:** Cigarette smoking causes numerous symptoms and diseases that impact on daily functioning and overall well being..

### Benefits of Smoking Cessation:

Within 20 minutes of smoking that last cigarette, the body begins a series of changes that continue for years (*Surgeon General's Report, 1988*):

- After 20 minutes - Blood pressure drops to a level close to that before the last cigarette.
- After 8 hours - Carbon monoxide level in blood drops to normal.
- After 24 hours - Chance of heart attack decreases.
- After 2 weeks - Circulation improves; lung function increases up to 30%
- In 1 - 9 months - Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue and shortness of breath decrease. Cilia regain normal function in lungs, increasing ability to handle mucous, clean the lungs and reduce infection.

**Conclusion:** Quitting smoking at any age offers numerous health and quality of life benefits. It is never too late to quit smoking.

## **The Financial Cost of Smoking:**

As of January 1, 1999, the average cost of a pack of cigarettes is, at minimum, \$3.00 per pack.

The cost of smoking one pack per day x \$3.00 per pack =

\$21.00 per week      \$84.00 per month      \$1008.00 per year

**Conclusion:** People who smoke spend a significant amount of money each day, month and year on cigarettes, often at the expense of other things they would like to buy for themselves or their family.

## **What you are really smoking!**

ACETONE (poisonous solvent, nail polish remover)

ALKALOIDS

AMMONIA (poisonous gas, cleaning agent)

ARSENIC (poisonous metallic element)

BEESWAX

BUTANE

CARBON MONOXIDE (colorless, odorless poisonous chemical)

FORMALDEHYDE (embalming fluid)

GLYCEROL

LACTIC ACID (caustic agent)

LEAD (blue-gray metallic poisonous element)

METHANE

METHANOL

NICKEL

NICOTINE

NITRIC ACID

PHENOL (toilet bowl disinfectant)

POLONIUM 210 (nuclear)

QUINOLINE (specimen preservative)

RADON

SULFURIC ACID (powerful corrosive acid)

TURPENTINE

To get a listing of additives and ingredients per brand:

[www.cctc.ca/bcreports/additive\\_index.htm](http://www.cctc.ca/bcreports/additive_index.htm)