

# Smoking



The Flora Project



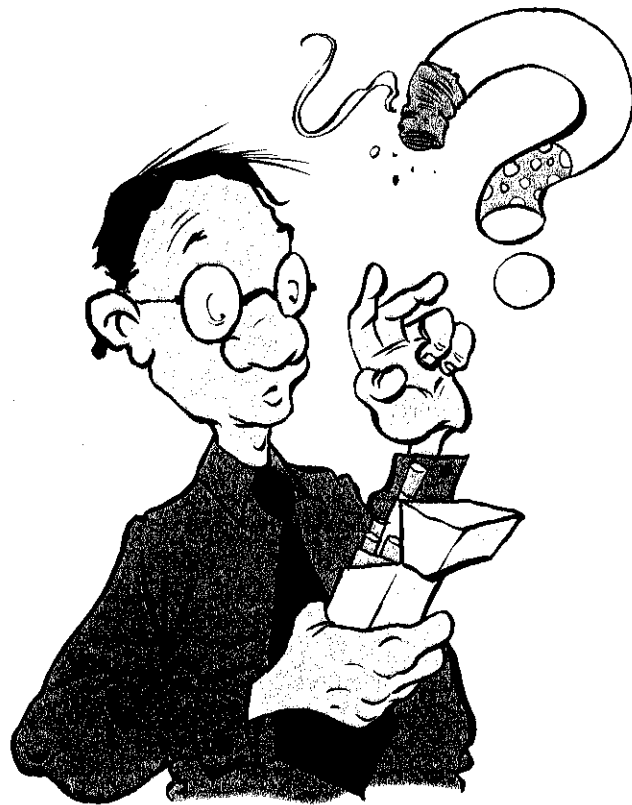
## Smoking or non smoking

There is a growing realisation that smoking is one of the greatest health hazards.

Smoking is the biggest cause of diseases leading to early deaths in England. It is estimated to account for nearly one fifth of all deaths each year - 120,000 lives in the UK.

Add to this the risk of cancer, the hacking cough, bronchitis, diseases linked to the circulatory system, sore throats, ulcers, and it's little wonder that people choosing the healthy heart option say NO to tobacco.

- Stop smoking and your risk of coronary heart disease is almost halved after one year.
- If people in the UK did not smoke cigarettes, about 10,000 fewer men and women of working age would die from heart attacks each year.
- 28% of boys and 33% of girls aged 15 smoke regularly and these figures are rising.



## Why does smoking affect the heart?

Tobacco smoke is packed with poisons that can damage the heart and blood vessels;

- Nicotine - an addictive poison, makes the heart beat faster, and makes blood pressure rise temporarily. It also increases the risk of blood clots.
- Carbon monoxide - a poisonous gas released when tobacco burns. Inhaled by the smoker, it dramatically cuts the amount of oxygen the blood can carry around the body and to the heart.

So when you smoke, your heart is having to work harder and is getting less oxygen.



## How much at risk is the smoker?

Smoking dramatically increases the risk of developing heart disease, lung cancer and many other diseases. These diseases are not always fatal but can seriously affect your quality of life. Smoke and you're more likely to die before you retire.

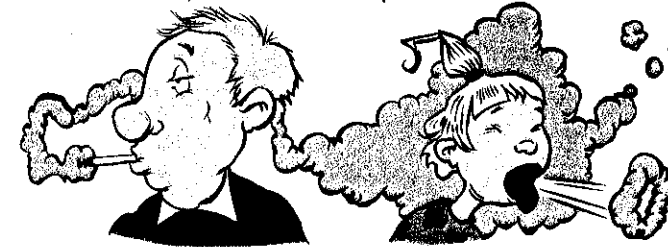
If you are under 50 and smoke your risk of heart disease is up to 10 times that of a non-smoker of similar age.

Women are as much at risk as men of developing diseases from smoking. Why not join the growing number of women, and men, choosing to quit?

## What about the risk for the passive smoker?

Cigarettes give off two types of smoke - "mainstream smoke" is filtered by the cigarette and inhaled by the smoker. The other type is sidestream smoke which goes directly from the end of the cigarette into the air. As it is not filtered, it contains higher concentrations of harmful substances than the mainstream smoke. It is therefore potentially dangerous to non-smokers, especially when they are exposed to it for long periods of time.

Children who are exposed to their parents' sidestream smoke are more prone than other children to serious chest illnesses such as pneumonia, lung cancer and bronchitis. They are also more likely to smoke if their parents do.



## The benefits of giving up

Give up and the risks decrease dramatically. Because nicotine is addictive this will be difficult and withdrawal symptoms such as irritability and restlessness can be experienced. These should last only a few weeks, however, and will be well worth the discomfort - almost 11.5 million people in Great Britain are ex-smokers. If you do give up you should not only feel much fitter but your risk of developing heart disease will rapidly decrease during the first year. If you continue to be a non-smoker the risks will decrease so that, in time, the risks will be almost the same as they are for someone who has never smoked.

But there's more to quitting smoking than a healthy heart and healthy lungs. We can all spot smokers who quit - they're just so full of themselves! But with good reason. Until you kick the weed it's hard to appreciate, but it's a fantastic feeling. With food it's like having a veil lifted - you can really taste again, really enjoy it. As general fitness returns your body feels renewed, recharged, and as you continue to say NO to tobacco, it's a fantastic boost to your self esteem.

# Be Pro-active

## Quit smoking



Remember that smoking is one of several risk factors for heart disease - there are five others to bear in mind.

Collect all 6 leaflets in this series: **Smoking, Blood Pressure, Weight, Eating to Manage Your Cholesterol, Physical Activity and Stress and Relaxation.**

### Help yourself to quit

1. Stop Day - choose a day to stop and stop completely on that day.
2. Tell everyone you're stopping - this will give you support and encouragement to stick with it when you feel tempted to light up.
3. Take it a day at a time and each day try for just one more day.
4. Identify times when you particularly crave a cigarette and make sure you have something to occupy your hands (worry beads, a pencil to doodle with, sewing).
5. Ash cash - work out how much you're saving and plan how to spend it.
6. Think positively - you're a non-smoker, not a smoker who's given up. When you're offered a cigarette say 'No thanks, I don't smoke.' - every time!
7. When you feel the urge to smoke, remember how well you've done so far and how hard it was to give up in the first place.
8. Not everyone succeeds the first time. It's a strong addiction, but don't give up trying.
9. Find out what's available locally. Ask your family doctor or the practice nurse about the availability of nicotine patches, nicotine chewing gum, stop-smoking groups, hypnosis, acupuncture, aversion therapy and relaxation classes or contact QUIT for a 'give-up' pack (see back for address).

### Planning for Change

Whilst reading this leaflet you may have found things which you feel you could change - why not record them here. Remember that it is easier to make one small change at a time than trying several big changes all at once. Make your changes simple and achievable.

I Will...

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....

### For more information...

...Speak to your family doctor or practice nurse

Or contact any of the organisations below:

**British Heart Foundation**, 14 Fitzhardinge Street, London W1H 4DH

**Health Education Authority**, Trevelyan House, 30 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 3HW

**Sports Council**, 16 Upper Woburn Place, London WC1H 0QP

**ASH - Action on Smoking and Health**, 16 Fitzhardinge Street, London W1H 9PL

**QUIT - The National Society for Non-Smokers**, Victory House, 170 Tottenham Court Road, London W1T 0HA

**Quit line: 0800 002200**

