



NICOTINE/TOBACCO FACTS

By Carol Meyer-Niedzwiecki

- Tobacco is the #1 preventable cause of death in Calhoun County
- The majority of lung cancer deaths are caused by smoking
- The average age Calhoun County youth report using tobacco for the first time is 11
- Cigarette smoke releases over 4,000 chemicals, over 50 which can cause cancer, a Group A carcinogen, a substance known to cause cancer for which there is no safe level of exposure.
- If one does not start smoking before the age of 19, the chance that they will is very low.
- Secondhand smoke includes both smoke from a burning cigarette/cigar/pipe, smoke exhaled by smokers

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

cough
smell
stained, yellow fingers

What causes nicotine addiction? Nicotine is an addictive drug. It causes changes in the brain that make people want to use it more and more. It can cause unpleasant withdrawal symptoms which is the challenge for smokers seeking to quit. Nicotine addiction has historically been one of the hardest addictions to break.

The 1988 Surgeon General's Report, "Nicotine Addiction," concluded that

- Cigarettes and other forms of tobacco are addicting.
- Nicotine is the drug that causes addiction.

- Pharmacologic and behavioral characteristics that determine tobacco addiction are similar to those that determine addiction to drugs such as heroin and cocaine.

Effects/Consequences:

When a person smokes a cigarette, the body responds immediately to the chemical nicotine in the smoke. Nicotine causes a short-term increase in blood pressure, heart rate and the flow of blood from the heart. It also causes the arteries to narrow. The smoke includes carbon monoxide, which reduces the amount of oxygen the blood can carry. This, combined with the nicotine effects, creates an imbalance between the demand for oxygen by the cells and the amount of oxygen the blood can supply.

Cigarette smoking may increase the risk of developing hardening of the arteries and heart attacks in several ways. First, carbon monoxide may damage the inner walls of the arteries, encouraging fatty buildups in them. Over time, this causes the vessels to narrow and harden. Nicotine may also contribute to this process. Smoking also causes several changes in the blood that make clots — and heart attack — more likely.

Symptoms of nicotine withdrawal? Irritability , impatience , hostility , anxiety , depressed mood , difficulty concentrating , restlessness , decreased heart rate , increased appetite or weight gain

How long does nicotine stay in the body? From 85–90% of nicotine in the blood is metabolized by the liver and excreted from the kidney rapidly. The estimated half-life for nicotine in the blood is 2 hours. Smoking represents a multiple dosing situation with considerable accumulation during smoking. Therefore, it can be expected that blood nicotine would persist at significant levels for 6 – 8 hours after smoking stopped.

PREVENTION TIPS FOR PARENTS

If you suspect your child may be smoking, intervening is important. Even though you may feel that “at least my child is not using drugs,” smoking is both a drug and a very highly addictive one. Tobacco use may be an early predictor of later other drug use (gateway drug).

talk with your children
explain the dangers, long and short term consequences

Smoking is addictive, but also a learned behavior that you must unlearn. It is not easy to stop, but it can be done if you are serious about quitting. Follow these tips to quit:

- Cut down the number of cigarettes you smoke each day.

- Clean out ashtrays and start putting them away one by one. Clean the drapes, the car, your office, or anything else that smells of tobacco smoke.
- Get a friend or spouse to quit with you.
- Start exercising before you quit.
- Switch to a brand of cigarettes you do not like as much.
- Throw away spare lighters.
- Smoke alone if you like to smoke with people.
- Become aware of why you smoke each cigarette. Avoid the things that cause you to smoke.
- Write down a list of the top 5 reasons you want to quit. Read this list daily.
- Pick a date to quit and slowly reduce your smoking until your quit date. On your quit date, stop completely.

Calhoun County *smoking cessation resources:*

A. Amy South Hypnotherapy

(269) 963-2333

American Cancer Society

(800) 227-2345

www.cancer.org

American Heart Association

(800) 968-2425

www.americanheart.org

American Lung Association

(800) 586-4872

www.lungusa.org

Battle Creek Health System

One-on-One Smoking Cessation Counseling

(269) 966-8438

Calhoun County Public Health Dept.

Free Tobacco Quit Kit

(269) 969-6393

EX Campaign

(800) QUIT-NOW

www.BecomeAnEX.org

Fresh Start

Battle Creek Health System

Free – offered in February and October

(269) 966-8438

Great Start

(for expectant mothers)

(866) 66-START

www.americanlegacy.org/greatstart

Health and Energy Acupuncture

(269) 962-2836

Michigan Dept. of Community Health

(800) 537-5666

www.michigan.gov/tobacco

National Cancer Institute

(800) 4-CANCER

www.cancer.gov

Nicotine Anonymous

(415) 750-0328

www.nicotine-anonymous.org

Oaklawn Hospital Hypnotherapy

(269) 781-9119

QuitNet

www.quitnet.com

Tobacco Quit Line Coaching Hotline

(800) 480-QUIT

Also available: Free nicotine patches for those
without health insurance

US Dept. of Health & Human Services

(800) 358-9295

www.surgeongeneral.gov/tobacco

www.smokefree.gov