

## Background Information

### Harmful Effects of Smoking

Tobacco products have short-term health effects (things that happen right away) and long-term health effects (things that happen over a long period of time). Smoking has many negative health effects on the body including:

**Illness** refers to poor health or sickness from disease of the body and/or mind. If a disease or illness is on-going, it is considered to be chronic. Some illnesses such as a cold or flu, with treatment or care, usually heal over time. They are referred to as short-term illnesses. Research has shown that those who smoke are more susceptible to flu and colds, and they tend to last longer.

For more information on tobacco and illness, see the following link:

[http://kidshealth.org/teen/infections/bacterial\\_viral/colds.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/infections/bacterial_viral/colds.html)

**Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)** is a long-term lung disease mainly caused by smoking. COPD includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema. COPD slowly damages the airways, making them swollen and partly blocked by mucus. It also damages the tiny air sacs at the tips of the airways called alveoli. This makes it hard to move air in and out of the lungs. The main symptoms of COPD include; a long-lasting cough, fatigue, coughing up mucus, and being short of breath.

For more information on COPD, see the following link:

[http://www.lung.ca/diseases-maladies/copd-mpoc/what-quoi/index\\_e.php](http://www.lung.ca/diseases-maladies/copd-mpoc/what-quoi/index_e.php)

**Asthma** is a long-term disease that makes it difficult to breathe. Asthma cannot be cured, but it can be managed. (Chances are, every classroom will have a student with asthma, as one child out of ten have it!) With asthma, the airways are extra sensitive. When exposed to certain triggers (irritants) the airways become red and swollen, and fill up with mucus. This makes the airways narrow, so it's harder for the air to pass through. The muscles around the airways also spasm causing the airways to squeeze together and tighten. Being exposed to cigarette smoke often makes it difficult to manage asthma symptoms. Smoking and second-hand smoke can also lead to asthma.

For more information on asthma, see the following link:

[http://www.lung.ca/diseases-maladies/asthma-asthme/what-quoi/index\\_e.php](http://www.lung.ca/diseases-maladies/asthma-asthme/what-quoi/index_e.php)

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A **stroke** is a sudden loss of brain function. It is caused by an interruption of blood flow to the brain. The effects of a stroke depend on where the brain is injured, and how much damage has occurred. A stroke can impact the ability to move, see, remember, speak, reason, read and write. Smoking causes an increase in blood pressure and lowers oxygen levels in the blood which increases the risk of developing a stroke.

For more information on strokes, see the following links:

[http://www.heartandstroke.sk.ca/site/c.inKMILNIEmG/b.3657421/k.7212/Stroke\\_What\\_is\\_Stroke.htm](http://www.heartandstroke.sk.ca/site/c.inKMILNIEmG/b.3657421/k.7212/Stroke_What_is_Stroke.htm)

**Cancer** is a disease that starts in the body's cells. Smoking increases the likeliness of getting certain types of cancers such as lung, esophageal, laryngeal, bladder, oral (mouth), nasal cavity, stomach, pancreatic, kidney, and the cervix, to name a few.

For more information on cancers related to tobacco, see the following link:

<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/tobacco/smoking>

**Heart disease** consists of many different conditions that are harmful to the heart (e.g., heart attack, angina, arrhythmia, etc.). Using tobacco causes the blood vessels to narrow, the heart to beat faster and increases blood pressure.

For more information on heart disease, see the following links:

<http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/smokeless-tobacco-facts>  
[www.heartandstroke.sk.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.sk.ca)

**Ulcers** are a break on the skin/organ, and/or from cells of tissue that have become inflamed, have died or shed. Studies have shown an increase in ulcers among those who smoke.

For more information on ulcers and tobacco use, see the following link:

[http://kidshealth.org/teen/diseases\\_conditions/digestive/ulcers.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/diseases_conditions/digestive/ulcers.html)

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#### **Other harmful effects of smoking:**

- Cataracts
- Gum disease
- Second-hand smoke
- Tooth decay
- Ear infections
- Early aging
- Decreased athletic endurance
- Slower healing time from acne and sores
- Loss of taste
- Loss of smell
- Unpopular - 8 out of 10 people are tobacco-free!
- Bad breath
- Yellow teeth
- Yellow fingers
- Wrinkles
- Dry skin
- Phlegm
- Persistent cough
- Pneumonia
- Expensive
- Addictive

**...plus many others!**

