

Tobacco and Cancer

SIMMONS CANCER INSTITUTE

AT SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY



Cigarettes and Cancer

Cigarette smoking is the most preventable cause of death in the United States. One in five deaths in the United States is attributable to smoking. Not only does it contribute significantly to coronary heart disease, it causes approximately 30% of cancer deaths each year. It is responsible for 87 percent of lung cancer deaths. It causes cancers of the lung, larynx, mouth, esophagus, pharynx, and bladder. It also plays a role in pancreas, kidney and cervical cancers. Tobacco smoke contains about 4000 chemical agents including over 60 substances known to cause cancer.

Quitting smoking reduces the risk of getting cancers. Ten years after quitting smoking, the risk of getting lung cancer is reduced to about one-third to one-half of those who continue to smoke. It also reduces the risk of getting cancers caused by tobacco smoke. The quickest non-cancer health benefit of quitting smoking is lowering the risk of coronary heart disease. The risk is cut by half one year after quitting smoking.

Cigars and Cancer

Cigar use is on the rise, particularly among young men and woman. Cigars are different from cigarettes. They are typically made up of a single air-cured or dried burley tobacco. The fermentation process causes the tobacco to taste and smell different than cigarettes. They come in different sizes. A large cigar can contain as much tobacco as a whole pack of cigarettes.

Cigar smoking increases the risk of death from lung, oral cavity (lip, tongue, mouth, throat), esophagus and larynx cancers. For those who inhale, cigar smoking is linked to pancreas and bladder cancers. The risk of death from larynx, oral and esophageal cancers is four to ten times greater compared to non-smokers. It is even higher for those who smoke more than three cigars a day.

Smokeless Tobacco

There are two types of smokeless tobacco. Snuff is a finely ground or shredded tobacco. Chewing tobacco is loose leaf, plug or twist forms. Smokeless tobacco is also called spit or spitting tobacco. Both types of smokeless tobacco contain 28 cancer causing agents.

Smokeless tobacco causes many negative health effects including oral cancer. This includes cancers of the mouth, throat and pharynx. Oral cancer is difficult to treat. More than 30,000 new cases of oral cancer are diagnosed each year. There are more than 8,000 deaths every year from oral cancer. ***Smokeless tobacco is not a safe substitute for smoking.***

Secondhand Smoke

Secondhand smoke, also called environmental tobacco smoke, is made of two forms of smoke. Sidestream smoke comes from the burning end of a cigarette, cigar or pipe. Mainstream smoke is the smoke exhaled by the smoker.

Resources

It is important to quit using tobacco. Talk to your physician about quitting smoking. There are numerous resources to assist with quitting tobacco use. Many hospitals and organizations offer cessation services. Following are a few, but certainly not the only, resources to obtain information on quitting smoking.

American Cancer Society
(www.cancer.org)

American Lung Association
(www.lungusa.org)

Illinois Department of Public Health
(www.idph.state.il.us)

Quitline 1-866-784-8937

National Cancer Institute
(www.nci.nih.gov)

Secondhand smoke also causes numerous health effects including cancer. It is a known risk factor for lung cancer. Annually in the United States, there are approximately 3,000 lung cancer deaths as a result of exposure to second hand smoke. Secondhand smoke is also linked to sinus and nasal cancer. While more research is needed, research is beginning to associate secondhand smoke with cervical, breast and bladder cancers.

It is important for non tobacco users to avoid secondhand smoke to reduce their risks of cancer and other chronic health conditions.

For more information about the Simmons Cancer Institute at SIU or any of our programs, *contact us at 217-545-6818 or visit us at www.siumed.edu/cancer.*

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