

“Don't tell me why, tell me how to quit smoking”

Health concerns usually top the list of reasons people give for quitting smoking. But smokers may not be aware of how many illnesses they may avoid by kicking the habit.

Nearly everyone knows that smoking can cause lung cancer, but few people realise it is also a risk factor for cancer of the mouth, voice box (larynx), bladder, kidney, pancreas, cervix, stomach, and some leukemias.

Smoking causes serious respiratory diseases such as emphysema and chronic bronchitis for up to 20 percent of smokers. These progressive lung diseases grouped under the term COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)-are usually diagnosed in current or former smokers in their 60s and 70s. COPD causes chronic illness and disability and is eventually fatal. Smokers also have twice the risk of dying of heart attacks, as nonsmokers. And smoking is a major risk factor for peripheral vascular disease, a narrowing of the blood vessels that carry blood to the leg and arm muscles.

For women, there are unique risks. Women over 35 who smoke and use "the pill" (oral contraceptives) are in a high-risk group for heart attack, stroke, and blood clots of the legs. Women who smoke are also more likely to have a miscarriage or a low birth-weight baby.

Alonger, healthier life

No matter what your age or how long you have smoked, quitting will help you live longer. How much longer? A 65-year-old woman who quits will add about 4 years to her life, according to a 2002 report in the American Journal of Public Health. The study looked at thousands of health records and also found that people who quit at age 35

lived on average 8 1/2 years longer than those who continued to smoke.

Ex-smokers also enjoy a higher quality of life with fewer illnesses from cold and flu viruses, better self-reported health status, and reduced rates of bronchitis and pneumonia.

Women who stop smoking before becoming pregnant or during the first trimester of pregnancy reduce their risk of miscarriage or of having a low birth-weight baby to the same level as women who have never smoked.

Visible and immediate rewards of quitting

Quitting helps stop the damaging effects of tobacco on your appearance including:

- Premature wrinkling of the skin
- Bad breath
- Stained teeth
- Gum disease
- Bad smelling clothes and hair
- Yellow fingernails

Kicking the tobacco habit also offers benefits that you will notice immediately and some that will develop gradually in the first few weeks. These rewards can improve your day-to-day life substantially:

- Food tastes better.
- Sense of smell returns to normal.

Ordinary activities no longer leave you out of breath (climbing stairs, light housework, etcetera.)

Cost

The prospect of better health is a major reason for quitting, but there are others as well. Smoking is expensive. Do you really want to continue burning up your



money with nothing to show for it except possible health problems?

Social acceptance

Smoking is less socially acceptable now than it was in the past. While decisions may not be based entirely on social acceptance, most workplaces have some type of smoking restrictions. Some employers prefer to hire nonsmokers.

Friends may ask you not to smoke in their houses or cars. Public buildings, concerts, and even sporting events are largely smoke-free. Like it or not, finding a place to smoke can be a hassle.

Smokers may find their opportunities for dating or romantic involvement, including marriage, are largely limited to only other smokers, who make up

only about 1/4th of the population.

Health of others

Smoking not only harms your health but the health of those around you. Exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (also called passive smoking or second hand smoke) includes exhaled smoke as well as smoke from burning cigarettes. Studies have shown that environmental tobacco smoke can cause lung cancer in healthy nonsmokers. It is also associated with sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and low-birth weight infants. Smoking by mothers is linked to a higher risk of their babies developing asthma in childhood, especially if the mother smokes while pregnant. Babies and children raised in a household where there is smoking have

more ear infections, colds, bronchitis, and other respiratory problems than children from nonsmoking families. Environmental smoke can also cause eye irritation, headaches, nausea, and dizziness.

Setting an example

If you have children, you want to set a good example for them. When asked, nearly all smokers say they do not want their children to smoke, but children whose parents smoke are more likely to start smoking themselves. You can become a good role model for them by quitting now.

Tips on how to quit smoking

Smokers often say, "Don't tell me why to quit, tell me how." There is no one right way to quit, but there are some key elements in quitting smoking successfully. These 4 factors are crucial:

- Making the decision to quit
- Setting a quit date and choosing a quit plan
- Dealing with withdrawal
- Maintenance or staying quit

Making the decision to quit

The decision to quit smoking is one that only you can make. Others may want you to quit, but the real commitment must come from you.

Researchers have looked into how and why people stop smoking. They have some ideas, or models, of how this happens.

The Health Belief Model says that you will be more likely to stop smoking if you:

- Believe that you could get a smoking-related disease and this worries you
- Believe that you can make an honest attempt at quitting smoking

ing Believe that the benefits of quitting outweigh the benefits of continuing to smoke

Know of someone who has had health problems as a result of their smoking

Do any of these apply to you?

The Stages of Change Model identifies the stages that a person goes through in making a change in behavior. Here are the stages as they apply to quitting smoking:

Pre-contemplator - This is the smoker who is not thinking seriously about quitting right now.

Contemplator - This is the smoker who is actively thinking about quitting but is not quite ready to make a serious attempt yet. This person may say, "Yes, I'm ready to quit, but the stress at work is too much, or I don't want to gain weight, or I'm not sure if I can do it."

Preparation - Smokers in the preparation stage seriously intend to quit in the next month and often have tried to quit in the past 12 months. They usually have a plan.

Action - This is the first 6 months when the smoker is actively quitting.

Maintenance - This is the period of 6 months to 5 years after quitting when the ex-smoker is aware of the danger of relapse and take steps to avoid it.

Where do you fit in this model - If you are thinking about quitting, setting a date and deciding on a plan will move you into the preparation stage, the best place to start.

Source: <http://health.yahoo.com>

What is the WHO?



The World Health Organisation (WHO) is a specialised agency of the United Nations that directs and coordinates international health work. WHO currently has 191 member states.

The 1945 United Nations conference in San Francisco unanimously approved a proposal to create a new international health organisation. Several different international health

organisations had existed before, but none had a worldwide scope like the United Nations. In 1945, the constitution founding the new World Health Organisation was approved, and on April 7, 1948, it was ratified. April 7 is now called World Health Day in honor of WHO's creation.

Central to WHO's mission is its definition of health: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity so that each citizen can lead a socially and economically productive life."

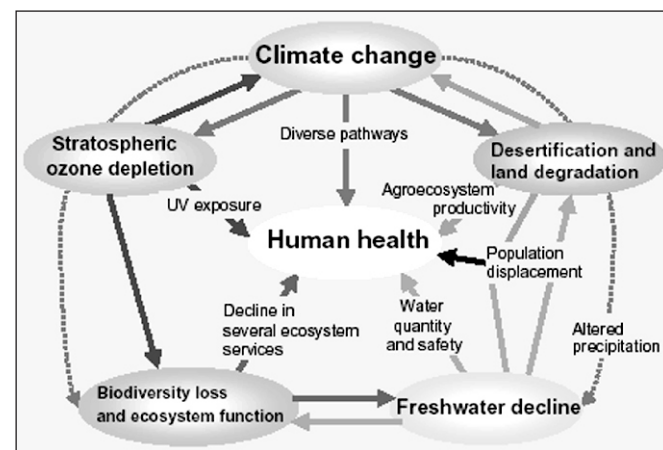
The WHO constitution states that governments have a responsibility for the health of their people, and the organisation works closely with governments, as well as non-governmental organisations, to promote health.

WHO's main functions are:

- λ to give worldwide guidance in the field of health.
- λ to set global standards for health.
- λ to cooperate with governments in strengthening national health programs.
- λ to develop and transfer appropriate health technology, information, and standards.

In the 1970s, WHO was instrumental in the global eradication of smallpox, and it is currently working to eliminate polio and leprosy, among other diseases. WHO is involved in a host of healthcare activities, from promoting safe laboratory standards to researching tropical diseases to encouraging healthy sexual practices and tobacco-free societies.

Global environmental change and health



Large-scale and global environmental hazards to human health include climate change, stratospheric ozone depletion, loss of biodiversity, changes in hydrological systems and the supplies of freshwater, land degradation and stresses on food-producing systems.

Appreciation of this scale and type of influence on human health requires a new perspective which focuses on

Source: WHO

Treating Pneumonia

Pneumonia is a serious infection or inflammation of your lungs. The air sacs in the lungs fill with pus and other liquid. Oxygen has trouble reaching your blood. If there is too little oxygen in your blood, your body cells can't work properly. Because of this and spreading infection through the body pneumonia can cause death.

Treating Pneumonia

If you develop pneumonia, your chances of a fast recovery are greatest under certain conditions: if you are young, if your pneumonia is caught early, if your defenses against disease are working well, if the infection hasn't spread, and if you're not suffering from other illnesses.

In the young and healthy, early treatment with antibiotics can

cure bacterial pneumonia, speed recovery from mycoplasma pneumonia, and a certain percentage of rickettsia cases. There is not yet a general treatment for viral pneumonia, although antiviral drugs are used for certain kinds. Most people can be treated at home.

The drugs used to fight pneumonia are determined by the germ causing the pneumonia and the judgment of the doctor. After a patient's temperature returns to normal, medication must be continued according to the doctor's instructions, otherwise the pneumonia may recur. Relapses can be far more serious than the first attack.

Besides antibiotics, patients are given supportive treatment: proper diet and oxygen to increase oxygen in the blood

when needed. In some patients, medication to ease chest pain and to provide relief from violent cough may be necessary.

The vigorous young person may lead a normal life within a week of recovery from pneumonia. For the middle-aged, however, weeks may elapse before they regain their accustomed strength, vigor, and feeling of well-being. A person recovering from mycoplasma pneumonia may be weak for an extended period of time.

In general, a person should not be discouraged from returning to work or carrying out usual activities but must be warned to expect some difficulties. Adequate rest is important to maintain progress toward full recovery and to avoid relapse. Remember, don't rush recovery!

If you have symptoms of Pneumonia

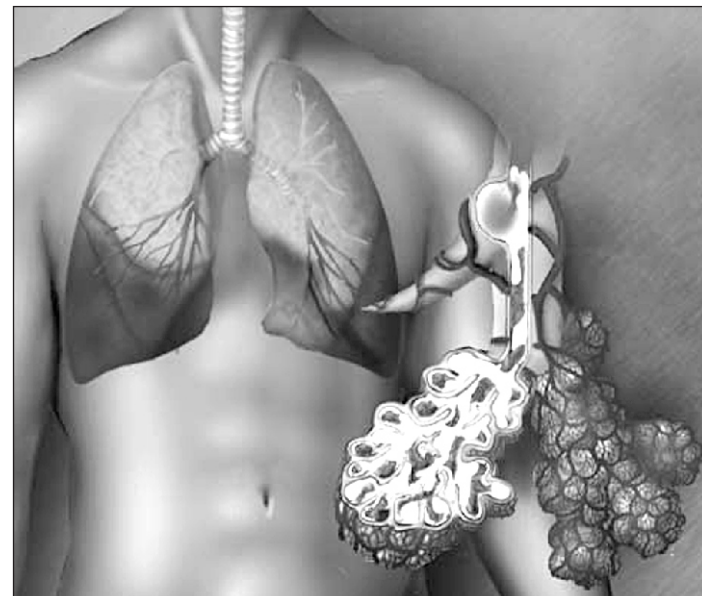
Call your doctor immediately. Even with the many effective antibiotics, early diagnosis and treatment are important.

Follow your doctor's advice. In serious cases, your doctor may advise a hospital stay. Or recovery at home may be possible.

Continue to take the medicine your doctor prescribes until told you may stop. This will help prevent recurrence of pneumonia and relapse.

Remember, even though pneumonia can be treated, it is an extremely serious illness. Don't wait, get treatment early.

Source: Internet



What is a Hearing Aid?

A hearing aid is an electronic, battery-operated device that amplifies and changes sound to allow for improved communication. Hearing aids receive sound through a microphone, which then converts the sound waves to electrical signals. The amplifier increases the loudness of the signals and then sends the sound to the ear through a speaker.

How common is hearing loss and what causes it?

Hearing loss is one of the most prevalent chronic health conditions, affecting people of all ages, in all segments of the population, and across all socioeconomic levels. Hearing loss can be hereditary, or it can result from disease, trauma, or long-term exposure to damaging noise or medica-



hearing aids will help. Hearing aids are particularly useful in improving the hearing and speech comprehension of people with sensorineural hearing loss. When choosing a hearing aid, the audiologist will consider your hearing ability, work and home activities, physical limitations, medical conditions, and cosmetic preferences. For many people, cost is also an important factor. You and your audiologist must decide whether one or two hearing aids will be best for you. Wearing two hearing aids may help balance sounds, improve your understanding of words in noisy situations, and make it easier to locate the source of sounds.

How can hearing aids help?

On the basis of the hearing test results, the audiologist can determine whether

<http://health.yahoo.com>

Facts about Bell's Palsy

Bell's palsy is the commonest cause of facial palsy.

The facial nerve controls the muscles of emotion and expression in the face and carries taste sensations from the front of the tongue to the brain.

In facial palsy the facial nerve is damaged or inflamed resulting in weakness or paralysis of one side of the face.

Partial or complete paralysis may result in drooping of the eyelid and the corner of the mouth on the affected side.

Other symptoms may include hypersensitivity to sound in the affected ear, watering of the eye, drooping from the mouth on the affected side and impairment of taste. It may be difficult to close the eye on the affected side.

In Ramsay Hunt syndrome, which is caused by the spread of the herpes varicella-zoster (shingles) virus to the facial nerve, facial palsy also occurs.

Other symptoms that may occur in Ramsay Hunt syndrome include intense ear pain, a rash around the

ear, hearing loss, vertigo, tinnitus, loss of taste and dry mouth and eyes.

The precise cause of Bell's palsy remains unknown although viral infection is believed to play a part.

It affects people of all ages.

Those with a weakened immune system are more likely to develop it.

Since the precise cause of Bell's palsy is unknown and it tends to appear suddenly over 24 hours it is difficult to prevent.

Maintaining a strong immune system may help to prevent Bell's palsy developing.

Treatment may involve steroid and anti-viral therapy. Painkillers may also be required.

It is important to protect the eye from drying which may result in infection and ulceration.

Around 80 percent of people make a full recovery within 3 months.

Source: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/health>



Skin patch useful for early Parkinson's Disease

A skin patch containing the drug rotigotine safely improves the movement problems that occur with Parkinson's disease, according to a report in the Archives of Neurology.

The patch releases a steady dose of the drug, which helps avoid the fluctuating symptoms that can occur with pills. Dr. Karen Blindauer, from the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, and colleagues note. Other potential benefits are increased compliance and effects that are not influenced by food intake, because the drug is not taken by mouth.

In the new study, 242 patients with early Parkinson's disease were treated with a patch containing one of four rotigotine doses or with an inactive "placebo" patch. Patches were applied to the abdomen once each day.

As the dose of the patch increased, movement problems improved and the patients were able to function better. The responses were

similar to those seen with two commonly used pills--Mirapex (pramipexole) and Requip (ropinirole).

Two rotigotine-treated patients experienced sudden loss of consciousness or onset of sleep while driving. Patients treated with the drug were also more likely to report nausea, vomiting, fatigue and somnolence than those in the placebo group.

Application site reactions were common in all of the groups--even the one that received placebo. The authors suggest that rotating the patch to other body sites may reduce these reactions.

Future studies are warranted, the authors conclude, to determine how the rotigotine patch compares with other drugs and also whether it works in patients with more advanced Parkinson's disease.

Source: <http://www.reuters.com>