Health Effects of Smoking

Health studies have shown that smoking can affect your heart as well as your lungs. Smoking also raises your risk of certain cancers. These are all good reasons to quit.

How Smoking Affects Your Body

Smoking has been linked with many serious illnesses. It also has been shown to increase signs of aging. A few of the health effects of smoking are listed below. Smoking can:

- Increase your risk of lung cancer, bladder cancer, and cervical cancer.
- Raise blood pressure, which increases your risk of heart attack or stroke.
- Reduce blood flow, which can slow healing and cause wrinkles.
- In pregnant women, cause bleeding problems, miscarriage, stillbirth, or birth defects.
- In men, cause problems with erections.

Facing Facts

When you smoke, your breathing becomes shallow and your lungs fill with smoke. Smoking cigarettes also fills your body with chemicals, such as nicotine and tar.

Smoke

Cigarette smoke contains carbon monoxide. This gas takes the place of oxygen in your blood.

Nicotine

This drug raises your blood pressure and heart rate. It reduces blood flow to your arms and legs, and slows digestion.

Tar

Tar is what's left after tobacco is smoked. This sticky brown material gums up your lungs, so less oxygen gets into your bloodstream.

Other Chemicals

Cigarette smoke contains over 4,000 other chemicals, including formaldehyde, arsenic, and lead. Dozens of these chemicals are known to cause cancer.

Source: Krames Staywell