

# Health Effects of Smoking

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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.

*Krames Staywell*