

"It will Never happen to Me"

Eighty-five per cent of smokers start before their 19th birthday.

1 > ADDICTION > Nicotine in cigarettes is a powerful, addictive drug that enters your brain within just 10 seconds of taking a puff on a cigarette. It alters how your brain works and can be harder to quit than heroin.

2 > LUNG DISEASE > If you smoke, you're 20 times more likely to die of lung cancer. But long before that, you'll find your lung capacity decreased. You may develop asthma or emphysema (often called "lung rot"). 90 % of all cases of emphysema are caused by smoking.

3 > MOUTH PROBLEMS > Smoking makes it harder for your saliva to remove germs in your mouth. You'll get stains, bad breath, and a higher chance of gum disease – even if you're young. And smoking is the main reason people get tongue and mouth cancers.

4 > STOMACH ULCERS > Smokers are more prone to peptic ulcers. They don't heal as fast in smokers, and they're more likely to recur. There's also growing evidence that smoking may increase the risk of chronic bowel disease.

5 > THROAT CANCER > Four out of every five cases of cancer of the esophagus are due to smoking. As smoke enters your throat, cancer-causing chemicals condense on your mucous membranes.

6 > SKIN DAMAGE > Tar from tobacco smoke turns your fingers yellow and stains your fingernails.

7 > HEART DISEASE > Smoking is a major cause of heart attacks. Within one minute of your first puff on a cigarette, your heart begins to beat faster. Your blood vessels clamp down, raising your blood pressure and forcing your heart to work harder. Early signs of heart disease and stroke can be found even in young smokers.

8 > PSORIASIS > Smokers are twice as likely as non-smokers to develop psoriasis – a disfiguring red and silver rash that can occur anywhere on your body.

9 > WRINKLES > Smoking decreases blood flow to the skin. This leads to leathery-looking skin and increased wrinkling, even when you're young.

10 > CATARACTS > The more you smoke, the greater your chance of developing cataracts – an eye problem that can cause blindness. Even former smokers have a 50 % higher risk of developing a cataract.

Don't become a statistic:
gosmokefree.ca/youth