

# WOMEN AND TOBACCO

## **Tobacco Fact Sheets**

International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union)

October 2003

# How does smoking affect your baby?

## ARE YOU PLANNING TO HAVE A BABY?

Being pregnant is a special time in a woman's life. In addition to getting enough rest and exercise, following a balanced diet rich in vitamins and minerals and going for regular prenatal checkups, one of the most important things you can do to ensure a healthy future for your child is to stop smoking and to avoid environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) also known as passive smoking or second-hand smoke. When you smoke, so does your baby: not only do you share your blood, food and oxygen but also the dangerous substances contained in tobacco products.

**A smoke free environment is important from the womb to the tomb.**

**Smoking and pregnancy is a lethal combination. It doubles the risk for spontaneous abortion. Certain other risk factors include miscarriage, still birth, placenta previa (the placenta is situated either very near or partially or completely covering the opening of the cervix), placenta abruption (part or all of the placenta separates from the uterine wall) and premature birth.**

### CONCEPTION AND FERTILITY

**Did you know that infertility is more prevalent in female smokers?** It is present two to three times more often than in non-smokers.



A recent study suggests that women who smoke take on average 2 months longer to become pregnant than non-smokers.

Quitting reverses this trend. Within a year ex-smokers and non-smokers conceive at the same rate.

### TOBACCO SMOKE AND THE FŒTUS

**Did you know that carbon monoxide (CO), one of the components of cigarette smoke is a dangerous foetal poison?** CO restricts the oxygen available to the foetus as it is more readily absorbed by the blood. It takes approximately seven hours for a mother's blood to be free from CO after her last cigarette, but for the foetus it takes at least twice as long.

**Did you know that if an expectant mother smokes a cigarette her foetus' heart will beat faster?**

The normal heart rate of 120 – 150 beats per minute increases by 20 to 40 beats per minute for half an hour.

It is a sign of acute oxygen deprivation. The foetus also moves less.



**It is never too late to quit smoking during pregnancy.**

Health benefits of quitting for both the mother and the foetus can be obtained any time throughout the entire 9 months.

**Quitting early produces the best results.**

### LOW BIRTH WEIGHT

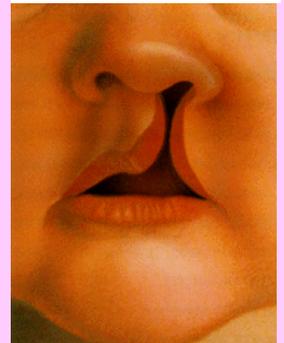
**Did you know that babies born to smoking mothers weigh less than babies of non-smoking mothers?** On average 200 g. (8 oz.) lighter.

Smoking leads to oxygen deprivation and a reduction in the amount of nutrients reaching the foetus. Lower birth weight infants are at higher risk of illness and slow early physical development.

**If a woman stops smoking within the first 3 months of her pregnancy, her risk of having a low weight baby will be similar to that of a non-smoker.**

### CLEFT LIP/PALATE

**Did you know that maternal smoking increases the risk of cleft lip and cleft palate?** According to a study conducted by researchers at the University of Michigan Health System, women who smoke while pregnant are 50 to 70 percent more likely than non-smokers to give birth to a baby with a cleft lip or palate.



The risk of birth defect rises with the number of cigarettes a mother-to-be smokes each day.

### BREASTFEEDING

**Did you know that smoking mothers produce less breast milk than non-smoking mothers?** Smoking mothers produce 690 g. while non-smoking mothers produce 960g.

The milk produced is lower in calories and fat; substances which are important to the development of an infant.

Nicotine is rapidly transported from the smoking mother's blood to her breast milk. The infant may be less willing to feed since the breast milk tastes bad.

**Breast milk is the best nutrition for an infant. Help your baby grow strong and healthy by breast feeding and quitting smoking.**

### SIDS OR COT DEATH

**Did you know that maternal smoking (both before and after birth) has been linked to SIDS?** In fact the risk of SIDS is 4 times higher if the mother smokes during pregnancy as compared with non-smoking mothers.

A study conducted in the US estimated that 30% of SIDS deaths could have been prevented if the mothers had stopped smoking during their pregnancy.

 Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden and unexplained death of an infant under one year of age.



**This ad is part of a £1m British government campaign to highlight the risks of passive smoking. The baby appears to be inhaling smoke.**

### PASSIVE SMOKING

**Did you know that children are more at risk from passive smoking than adults? Why?** Because their lungs are smaller and not fully developed. Their immune systems are also less protective.

Second-hand smoke contains over 4000 substances, 40 of which are known to cause cancer, for example arsenic, lead, chromium and cadmium.

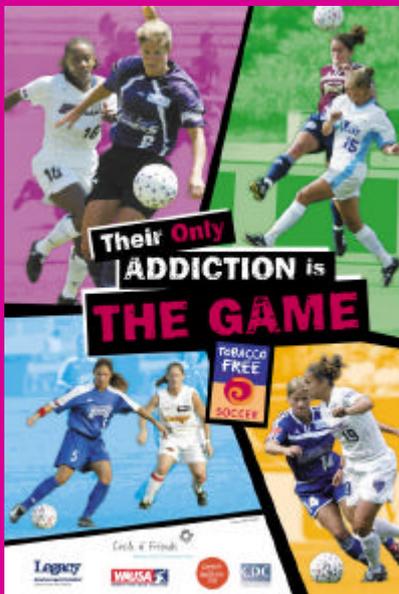
In addition to SIDS, passive smoking has been linked to an increase in the number of colds, asthma attacks and hospitalisations as well as an increased risk of developing asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia, breathing problems and ear disease.

**Invest in the health of your children. Stop making them victims of passive smoking. Children who grow up in a non-smoking environment are more likely to be non-smokers themselves.**

# How does smoking affect your daughter?

## Why does your daughter smoke?

- ◆ **Like mother, like daughter**  
Mothers tend to have a particularly strong impact on their daughter's smoking behaviour. Having parents or older siblings who smoke could give teenagers easy access to cigarettes.
- ◆ **To be like her peers**  
Most young people try their first cigarette because of positive peer attitudes about smoking. Smoking with friends becomes an important social activity. Note however, that most young people who are non-smokers have friends who don't smoke either.
- ◆ **To keep her weight in check**  
Adolescent girls who diet or who are concerned about their weight initiate smoking at higher rates than those with fewer weight concerns. In many countries the reasons girls start smoking are related to body image and a belief that smoking keeps you thin.
- ◆ **Positive image**  
A study in the UK showed that having positive beliefs about the advantages of smoking was an important predictor of taking up smoking in girls but not in boys. Smoking is thought of as being seductive and a way to deal with stresses of daily life. In their eyes, smoking gives them the feeling of independence, freedom and control.



Current female stars from the Women's United Soccer Association promoting that the only way to be a winner is to be tobacco free !

## BENEFITS OF PLAYING SPORTS

**Reduce stress**  
Physical activity can help to relieve the effects of stress, anxiety and depression.

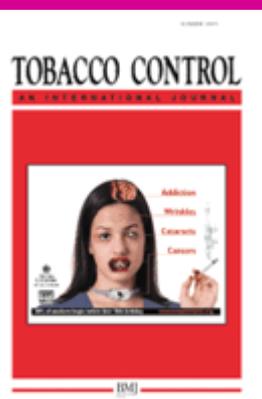
**Camaraderie**  
Group activities and team work provide opportunities for young people to make friends

**Build self-esteem**  
Martial arts and other sports raise the self-esteem of young people. Good self-esteem is an essential tool against tobacco and drugs.

**Keep fit**  
Regular physical activity is good for their health as it helps to keep weight under control and to build strong bones. Girls who smoke have weaker bones than non-smoking girls. **Regular smoking that starts during adolescence coupled with a lack of exercise are risk factors for osteoporosis later on in life.** Types of exercise that have a strengthening effect on bone tissue include dance, jogging, roller skating and skiing.



Saying 'yes' to sport means saying 'no' to tobacco. **WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY 2002**



Posters used by the government of British Columbia to discourage girls from smoking

## Did you know?

Nicotine addiction is the most common form of chemical dependence worldwide

Tobacco use can often lead to illicit drug use among young people. It is known as a gateway drug.

If smoking starts at age 15, life expectancy is reduced by 8 years.

Becoming a smoker before the age of 15 carries a much higher risk of developing lung cancer than does starting smoking at the age of 25.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOUR DAUGHTER QUIT

**It is very important for you to talk with your daughters**

Tell them about the downside of smoking

- Causes shortness of breath
- Makes your clothes, hair and breath smell bad.
- Not a good way to attract boys
- Is a compulsion rather than a free choice.

Find ways for them to relieve stress and insist that they get involved in extra curricular activities (sports clubs, etc).

If you are a smoker yourself, let your kids know how difficult it is to stop smoking once you have started.

**If your daughter already smokes, seeing you quit will encourage her to do the same. Your decision to stop smoking reinforces the idea in your daughter's mind never to start.**

# How does smoking affect your health?



'You've come a long way baby' was the slogan used by the tobacco brand 'Virginia Slims', the first cigarette targeted specifically at young women in the US in the late 60s. The ads showed independent, slender and beautiful women as smokers.

HEALTH ALERT : TOBACCO EPIDEMIC AMONG WOMEN  
AFTER YEARS OF SMOKING YOU COULD END UP LIKE THIS !



Tobacco kills more than ½ million women in the world each year.

If smoking among women continues to increase, the number of deaths will double by the year 2020.

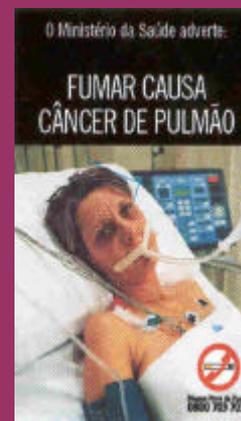
## THE TRUTH ABOUT WOMEN'S SMOKING AND THEIR HEALTH IF WOMEN SMOKE LIKE MEN, THEY DIE LIKE MEN.

**Did you know that women suffer from more smoking-related problems than men?** In addition to heart disease, strokes, respiratory disorders and lung cancer, they suffer from health problems which are gender specific. They also appear to be more susceptible, and at an even faster rate than men, to the negative effects of tobacco consumption.

**Did you know that lung cancer took more victims than breast and ovarian cancer combined in the USA in 2002?** Cigarette smoking is the major cause of lung cancer in women. Lung cancer is beginning to affect younger and younger women. However, the risk declines as soon as you quit.

**Did you know that smoking is associated with cancer in other parts of the body?** Such as cancers of the pancreas, mouth and throat, kidney, colon, cervix and bladder. Any part of the body which comes into contact with cigarette smoke or its toxins is vulnerable.

**ALL CANCERS CAUSED BY CIGARETTE SMOKING ARE PREVENTIBLE!**



'SMOKING CAUSES LUNG CANCER'  
One of the messages carried on one full side of all tobacco products sold in Brazil as of 31st January, 2002

**Did you know that if you take the contraceptive pill you should not smoke?**

This is especially important for women over 35 who are in a high risk group for heart attack, stroke and blood clots in the legs. Women of any age should **never** combine the two. Strokes are responsible for a significant number of premature deaths among women.

**The increased risk of having a stroke is reversible after smoking cessation.**

**Did you know that smoking affects your menstrual cycle?**

Female smokers may experience painful menstruation and irregular periods. Smoking may anticipate your menopause and increase its symptoms.

**Premenopausal women who quit smoking tend to go through menopause at the normal time.**

**Did you know that smoking affects your bones?**

Smoking has an inhibiting effect on estrogen, the most important hormone in preventing the loss of bone tissue. Smoking is one of the risk factors for osteoporosis which is a major cause of hip fracture. After menopause, women who still smoke start to lose bone mass faster than non-smoking women.

**Stopping smoking prevents further excess bone loss.  
Care for your bones, don't smoke!**

**Did you know that smoking can be a threat to eye health?**  
Cataracts

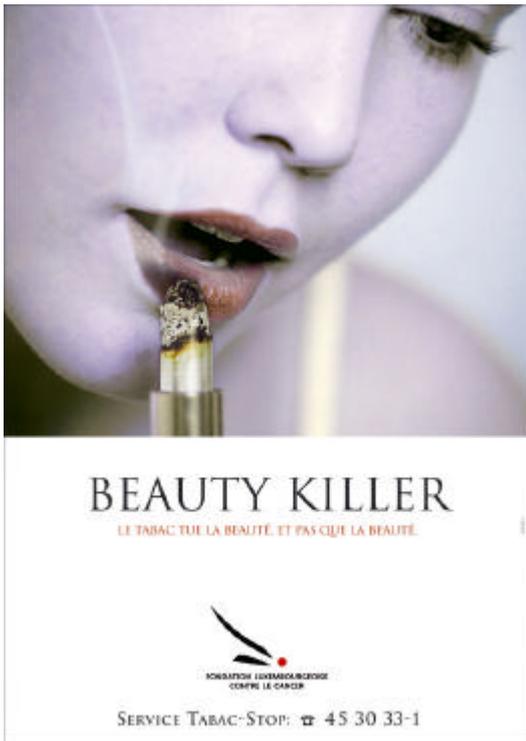
Researchers have found that smoking increases your risk of developing cataracts which increases with the number of cigarettes smoked. Cataract causes clouding of vision and if left untreated can lead to blindness.

Age related macular degeneration

Women who smoke have an increased risk of Age Related Macular Degeneration (AMD). AMD causes a loss in central vision which is required for activities such as reading, sewing, writing and driving as well as being a part of colour perception.

According to Dr. Johanna Seddon, Associate Professor of Ophthalmology, Harvard Medical School, "The risk of developing both cataract and macular degeneration are not significantly reduced by quitting smoking. There may be a small benefit for cataract. The important point is that smoking is harmful and one should not start for so many reasons, including eye diseases"

# How does smoking affect your looks?



A poster produced by the Luxembourg Foundation Against Cancer. It reads, "Tobacco kills beauty and much more."

Society shapes the way we think we should look. A youthful appearance is sought by many women and advertisements for beauty products tout claims of being able to stop the hands of time.

**Look at the model in this tobacco ad.**

- Do you look like this?

**She is indeed a picture of health, happiness and vitality but she is not a true reflection of a woman who smokes.**

- Are her teeth stained?
- Does her face show signs of premature aging?



Anti-tobacco posters can play an important role in highlighting tobacco's negative effects on your beauty. Cover model and ex-smoker, Christy Turlington portrays glamour as being tobacco free on this Center for Disease Control (CDC) poster.

Another example which breaks the pattern is the Miss Sweden competition. All the contestants must be totally smoke free. They are trained to go around to comprehensive schools to talk to the students about the dangers of tobacco consumption.



## SKIN

Smoking increases face wrinkles around the eyes and mouth. In a study conducted at The University of Utah, it was observed that if a woman smokes 10 cigarettes a day for 50 years, she will have five times as many wrinkles as a non-smoking woman of her age.

- How does your skin look?
- How does it compare with that of your non-smoking friends?

IF YOU STOP SMOKING NOW, YOU CAN HELP PREVENT FURTHER SKIN DAMAGE

## HAIR

Smoking reduces the circulation of blood and the uptake of oxygen, affecting not only the skin, but also the hair. Nicotine enters the hair shaft after being inhaled. Some research even relates smoking to premature grey hair and hair loss.

- Does your hair give off a smoky odour?
- Is your hair greasy, stained, dull, brittle and difficult to comb?

STOPPING SMOKING IMPROVES YOUR CHANCES FOR HEALTHY HAIR

## HANDS and NAILS

The chemical compounds in tobacco smoke are transported by the blood to the nails. Many chain smokers have yellow-brown discoloration of the fingernails. Fingers also tend to be tar-stained. Smoking, especially in women leads to poor circulation in the hands and feet.

- Do you hide your hands in public?
- Do your hands and feet feel cold?

WITHIN 2 TO 12 WEEKS OF SMOKING CESSATION, CIRCULATION IMPROVES AND NAILS RESUME THEIR NORMAL COLOUR

## TEETH and GUMS

The first ill-health effects of tobacco smoke are generally seen in the mouth as it is the first line of defence. Besides provoking bad breath, tobacco stains a smoker's teeth and can also be responsible for plaque, tooth loss, dental caries and gum disease. Smoking also prevents bleeding, the most important warning sign of inflammation in the gums (gingivitis).

- Are your teeth discoloured?
- Do you try to mask your smoker's breath?

SMOKING CESSATION ENHANCES SUCCESSFUL TREATMENT OF GINGIVITIS

# How does smoking affect your weight?



“WHO WANTS TO BE A SVELTE CORPSE?”  
ALTON OCHSNER,  
M.D. (CROMER 1985)

Poster produced by the Ligue Suisse Contre Le Cancer, Switzerland.

The captions are as follows,  
«Smoking makes you skinny!» (German),  
«Smoke to stay thin!» (French) and  
«Smoking keeps you thin!» (Italian) .

## ARE YOU DYING TO BE THIN?

Western society equates feminine attractiveness with being thin almost to the point of being anorexic. Some women internalise this message and will do anything to control their weight. The tobacco industry continues to use this phenomenon to push cigarettes as a dietary aid.

- Are you weight conscious?
- Do you use cigarettes to control your weight?
- Are you afraid of gaining weight if you quit?

**MANY WOMEN EXPRESS ONE MAJOR CONCERN WHEN THEY DECIDE TO STOP SMOKING— GAINING WEIGHT.**



This photo entitled “Cigarettes help to suppress your appetite” by Emmanuelle Pioli from ENSAAMA (Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Appliqués et des Métiers d’Art), France won awards in the 2003 “Paris Sans Tabac” competition.



## WEIGHT CONTROL THEME

The **Lucky Strike** campaign «**Reach for a Lucky Instead of a Sweet**» was the first media campaign that promoted smoking as an aid to dieting and weight control. This selling point appealed to women’s desire to be thin.

Smoking initiation among women aged 18 through 25 began to increase in the mid-20’s, the same time that the industry mounted the Chesterfield and Lucky Strike campaigns directed at women. Smoking increased dramatically among 12 – 18 year old girls when women’s brands and advertising specifically targeted women.

Cigarette companies capitalise on women’s concerns about their weight by employing the terms ‘slim’ and ‘thin’ in their ads, in their brand names, for example ‘Virginia Slims’ and ‘Silva Thins’ and in the images used.



## HOW DO THESE COMPARE?

Each cigarette can burn between 8 and 10 calories. A person who smokes between 20 to 30 cigarettes a day can burn approximately 200 to 300 extra calories daily.	Every cigarette smoked takes 7 minutes off your life. Therefore 20 to 30 cigarettes smoked in a day could reduce your life span by 2 and 3½ hours a day.
Smokers tend to weigh less than non-smokers. They may actually be below their “normal weight” since nicotine raises their metabolism and suppresses appetite (with more access to sugars and fats).	Smokers routinely have more upper body fat than non-smokers of the same BMI (body mass index). In women, upper body fat deposition is related to increased rates of stroke, diabetes and coronary heart disease.
Women’s concerns about weight may encourage smoking initiation, be a barrier to smoking cessation, and increase relapse rates among women who stop. Women tend to gain more weight than men upon quitting (3.8 kg as compared with 2.8 kg)	Weight gain upon cessation is not necessarily inevitable, in fact one third of all persons who quit gain no weight at all. The health benefits to be derived far outweigh any risks from weight gain. Weight gain can be controlled after smoking cessation is mastered by adopting a healthy lifestyle: balanced diet in particular more fruits and vegetables and plenty of exercise.

✶ Body mass index (BMI) is a measure of body fat based on height and weight = weight (kg)/height (m)<sup>2</sup>

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