

## **Tobacco use: the facts**

From 1 January 2019, the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences' Tygerberg Campus will be a smoke- and tobacco-free zone.

Do you need more motivation to quit using tobacco or to never get hooked in the first place? The facts below might persuade you to steer clear of cigarettes, cigars, hubbly bubbly and other forms of tobacco while you study, live and/or work on Campus:

- Tobacco use has no known health benefits. On the contrary, it causes disease, disability and premature death.
- Smoking is the number-one avoidable cause of death worldwide.
- Tobacco kills up to half of its users. That's around 6 million people every year – nearly 80% of whom reside in low and middle-income countries.
- On average, smokers die 10 years earlier than non-smokers.
- Tobacco use killed 100 million people in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and it will kill one billion people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century if current usage trends continue.
- It's estimated that more than 44,000 South Africans die as a result of tobacco-related diseases every year.
- Smoking increases your risk for cancer, ischaemic heart disease, respiratory conditions (e.g. asthma, pneumonia, emphysema and bronchitis), as well as stroke and aortic aneurysm.
- Smoking triples your risk of having a heart attack.
- Even people who smoke fewer than five cigarettes a day can have early signs of cardiovascular disease.
- Smoking increases the risk of men developing lung cancer by 25 times. The risk is even higher for female smokers.
- Smoking can cause cancer almost anywhere in your body. That includes your bladder, cervix, oesophagus, liver, stomach and pancreas.
- If you have asthma, tobacco smoke can trigger an asthma attack or make an attack worse.
- Smoking can affect your fertility, lead to gum disease and tooth loss, cause premature ageing, and increase your risk for rheumatoid arthritis, osteoporosis, cataracts, type 2 diabetes, and a host of other health conditions.
- Second-hand smoke kills those around you. In 2004, children accounted for 28% of deaths that occurred as a result of second-hand smoking across the globe.
- In adults, second-hand smoke causes serious cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, including coronary heart disease and lung cancer.
- In infants, second-hand smoke causes sudden death.
- In pregnant women, second-hand smoke causes low birth weight.
- Big Tobacco is targeting Africa right now: consumption of tobacco products in Sub-Saharan Africa increased by 52% between 1980 and 2016 (from 164 billion to 250 billion cigarettes).
- Tobacco use costs the world more than \$1 trillion in healthcare expenses and lost productivity every year.

## **The good news**

Are you convinced that it's better to stop smoking or to just never start? Here's what happens when you stop smoking, according to the World Health Organization (WHO):

- Within 20 minutes, your heart rate and blood pressure start to drop.
- After just 12 hours, the carbon-monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.

- Between two and 12 weeks after kicking the habit, your circulation improves and your lung function increases.
- One to nine months after quitting, coughing and shortness of breath starts to decrease.
- After one year, your risk of coronary heart disease is about half that of a smoker's.
- After 10 years, your risk of lung cancer falls to about half that of a smoker and your risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, oesophagus, bladder, cervix and pancreas decreases.
- After 15 years, your risk of coronary heart disease is that of a non-smoker's.

Need help quitting? We're here to assist. Visit Tygerberg Campus Health Services for an assessment, counselling and access to smoking-cessation tools, including medication and/or nicotine-replacement therapy. Campus Health Services are situated on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Tygerberg Student Centre. Alternatively, call +27 21 938 9590 to book an appointment. Let's do this together. Let's be tobacco free!