

# The Health Effects of Tobacco



## The fundamental truths about the health effects of tobacco are simple.

- Tobacco kills.
- Tobacco reduces the health of cigarette smokers and non-smokers who breathe in their second-hand smoke.
- Tobacco causes disease and harms nearly every organ in the body.

**Tobacco kills.** Health Canada estimates that approximately 37,000 people died in 2007 in Canada due to smoking. This represents more than 16% of all deaths in Canada.<sup>1</sup>

More people die each year because of tobacco than from HIV/AIDS, alcoholic liver disease, car accidents, murders, suicides, drowning and fires combined.<sup>2</sup>

**Tobacco reduces the health of smokers and non smokers alike.** Cigarette smoke remains the leading cause of preventable death and has negative health impacts on people of all ages: unborn babies, infants, children, adolescents, adults, and seniors.<sup>3</sup>

**Tobacco causes disease and harms nearly every organ in the body.** There is strong medical evidence that cigarette smoke is related to more than two dozen diseases and conditions including cancer, heart disease and respiratory disease.<sup>4</sup>

**Tobacco causes cancer:** 85 – 90% of lung cancers are caused by smoking cigarettes.<sup>5</sup> The more cigarettes you smoke, the greater your risk of lung cancer.<sup>6</sup>

Approximately 10% of lung cancers are caused by second-hand smoke.<sup>7</sup>

The National Cancer Institute of Canada estimates that the use of tobacco products is the single most important cause of preventable, premature cancer deaths.<sup>8</sup>

Smoking is also associated with cancer of the bladder, cervix, kidney, pancreas, stomach, esophagus, larynx, mouth and throat.

**Tobacco causes heart disease and stroke:** Tobacco is one of the major avoidable causes of cardiovascular disease.<sup>9</sup> Cardiovascular disease is a major cause of death in Canada.

Cigarette smoke causes a build up of plaque within your arteries and increases the demand for oxygen, but reduces the supply.<sup>10</sup>

Cigarette smoke also doubles your risk of stroke because it increases your blood pressure and makes your heart work harder.<sup>11</sup>

**Tobacco affects respiratory health:** Cigarette smoking is associated with a tenfold increase in the risk of dying from chronic obstructive lung diseases.<sup>12</sup>

About 90% of all deaths from chronic obstructive lung diseases are attributable to cigarette smoking.<sup>13</sup>

## More hard facts about the health consequences of tobacco:

**When someone first inhales smoke from a cigarette he or she usually feels dizzy and sick. First-time smokers may also cough a lot and have a dry, irritated throat as well as nausea, weakness, abdominal cramps, headache, or gagging. These symptoms may subside as a smoker becomes used to the nicotine.**

**Smoking cigarettes with lower machine-measured yields of tar and nicotine provides no clear benefit to health.<sup>14</sup>**

**Cigarette smoking increases the risk of chronic kidney disease.<sup>15</sup>**

**Cigarette smoking is associated with an increased risk of obesity, especially in men.<sup>16</sup>**

**Smokeless tobacco contains a variety of cancer-causing agents (carcinogens)<sup>17</sup> and increases the risk of developing oral cancer (mouth, lips, gums).<sup>18</sup>**



- <sup>1</sup> Baliunas D, Patra J, Rehm J, Popova S, Kaiserman M, Taylor B. Smoking-attributable mortality and expected years of life lost in Canada 2002: Conclusions for prevention and policy. *Chronic Diseases in Canada*, 2007;27(4):154-162. Accessed February 27, 2008 from [http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cdic-mcc/27-4/pdf/cdic274-3\\_e.pdf](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cdic-mcc/27-4/pdf/cdic274-3_e.pdf)
- <sup>2</sup> Source: Statistics Canada. Table 102-0551 - Deaths, by selected grouped causes, age group and sex, Canada, provinces and territories, annual, CANSIM (database). 2004. [http://cansim2.statcan.ca/cgi-win/cnsmcgl.exe?Lang=E&CANSIMFile=CII\CII\\_1\\_E.htm&RootDir=CII/](http://cansim2.statcan.ca/cgi-win/cnsmcgl.exe?Lang=E&CANSIMFile=CII\CII_1_E.htm&RootDir=CII/) (accessed: March 27, 2008)  
The total number of deaths from these causes is: 8,984, broken down as follows: HIV/Aids (420), alcoholic liver disease (1,116), car accidents (2,834), murders (515), suicides (3,613), drowning (251) and fires (235)
- <sup>3</sup> U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coordinating Center for Health Promotion, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2004. Accessed February 25, 2008 from [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/sgr\\_2004/highlights/9.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/sgr_2004/highlights/9.htm)
- <sup>4</sup> U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coordinating Center for Health Promotion, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2004. Accessed February 25, 2008 from [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/sgr\\_2004/highlights/9.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/sgr_2004/highlights/9.htm)
- <sup>5</sup> U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coordinating Center for Health Promotion, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2004. Accessed February 15, 2008 from [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/sgr\\_2004/00\\_pdfs/chapter2.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/sgr_2004/00_pdfs/chapter2.pdf)
- <sup>6</sup> U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coordinating Center for Health Promotion, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2004. Accessed February 15, 2008 from [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/sgr\\_2004/00\\_pdfs/chapter2.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/sgr_2004/00_pdfs/chapter2.pdf)
- <sup>7</sup> U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coordinating Center for Health Promotion, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2006. Accessed February 18, 2008 from <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke/report/chapter7.pdf>
- <sup>8</sup> Canadian Cancer Society/National Cancer Institute of Canada. (2007). *Canadian Cancer Statistics 2007*. Accessed February 26, 2008 from [http://www.cancer.ca/vgn/images/portal/cit\\_8675111\\_4/36/15/1816216925cw\\_2007stats\\_en.pdf](http://www.cancer.ca/vgn/images/portal/cit_8675111_4/36/15/1816216925cw_2007stats_en.pdf)
- <sup>9</sup> Teo KK, Ounpuu S, Hawken S, Pandey MR. Tobacco use and risk of myocardial infarction in 52 countries in the INTERHEART study: a case-control study. *The Lancet*. 2006;368:647-658. Accessed February 27, 2008 from [http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?Db=pubmed&Cmd=ShowDetailView&TermToSearch=16920470&ordinalpos=5&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed\\_ResultsPanel.Pubmed\\_RVDocSum](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?Db=pubmed&Cmd=ShowDetailView&TermToSearch=16920470&ordinalpos=5&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed_ResultsPanel.Pubmed_RVDocSum)
- <sup>10</sup> U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coordinating Center for Health Promotion, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2004. Accessed February 27, 2008 from [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/sgr\\_2004/00\\_pdfs/chapter3.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/sgr_2004/00_pdfs/chapter3.pdf)
- <sup>11</sup> U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coordinating Center for Health Promotion, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2004. Accessed February 27, 2008 from [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/sgr\\_2004/00\\_pdfs/chapter3.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/sgr_2004/00_pdfs/chapter3.pdf)
- <sup>12</sup> U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coordinating Center for Health Promotion, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2004. Accessed February 27, 2008 from [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/sgr\\_2004/highlights/4.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/sgr_2004/highlights/4.htm)
- <sup>13</sup> U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coordinating Center for Health Promotion, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2004. Accessed February 27, 2008 from [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/sgr\\_2004/highlights/4.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/sgr_2004/highlights/4.htm)
- <sup>14</sup> U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coordinating Center for Health Promotion, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2004. Accessed February 25, 2008 from [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/sgr\\_2004/highlights/9.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/sgr_2004/highlights/9.htm)
- <sup>15</sup> Jones-Burton C, Seliger SL, Scherer RW, Mishra SI, Vessal G, Brown J, et al. Cigarette smoking and incident chronic kidney disease: A systematic review. *American Journal of Nephrology* 2007;27(4):342-351. Accessed February 27, 2008 from [http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?Db=pubmed&Cmd=ShowDetailView&TermToSearch=17541263&ordinalpos=1&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed\\_ResultsPanel.Pubmed\\_RVDocSum](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?Db=pubmed&Cmd=ShowDetailView&TermToSearch=17541263&ordinalpos=1&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed_ResultsPanel.Pubmed_RVDocSum)
- <sup>16</sup> Chiolerio A, Jacot-Sadowski I, Faeh D, Paccaud F, Cornuz J. Association of cigarettes smoked daily with obesity in a general adult population. *Obesity*, 2007 May;15(5):1311-1318. Accessed February 27, 2008 from [http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?Db=pubmed&Cmd=ShowDetailView&TermToSearch=17495208&ordinalpos=2&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed\\_ResultsPanel.Pubmed\\_RVDocSum](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez?Db=pubmed&Cmd=ShowDetailView&TermToSearch=17495208&ordinalpos=2&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed_ResultsPanel.Pubmed_RVDocSum)
- <sup>17</sup> National Cancer Institute. *Smokeless Tobacco or Health: An International Perspective*. Bethesda, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute; 1992. Accessed February 26, 2008 from <http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/tcrb/monographs/2/index.html>
- <sup>18</sup> National Toxicology Program. *10<sup>th</sup> Report on Carcinogens*. Research Triangle Park, NC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, National Toxicology Program; 2002. Accessed February 26, 2008 from: <http://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/roc/>

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