

Cancer Nursing

AMERICAN
CANCER
SOCIETY

News

What Nurses Can Tell Their Patients About Smoking

"I'm so glad to hear you don't smoke. I hope you'll never start."

- Nicotine is an addictive substance; its action is similar to that of heroin and cocaine, and it is about as hard to shake.

"I'm seriously concerned about your smoking. I believe you've got what it takes to quit."

- Despite the difficulty of quitting, nearly half of all living adults who ever smoked have quit.

"I'm sorry to hear you've smoked all these years. But it's never too late to quit" (even at age 60, 65, 70, etc.).

- Elderly patients often have concurrent conditions, most of which will be improved by ceasing to smoke.
- Persons who stop smoking can experience restoration of lung health within a few years.

"Stopping smoking—or never taking it up—is the single most important thing you can do for your health."

- Smoking is associated with: cancer of the lung, mouth, pharynx, larynx, esophagus, pancreas, uterine cervix, kidney,

bladder, renal pelvis, and ureter; heart disease and cardiovascular disease, cerebrovascular disease and stroke, in young as well as older adults; respiratory ailments, including colds, chronic bronchitis, and emphysema; gastric ulcers; cataracts; and premature and excessive skin wrinkling.

"Your smoking is not only bad for you, it's bad for your family, children, friends, coworkers—everyone around you."

- Forty-three chemicals in tobacco smoke have been determined to be carcinogenic.
- About 3,800 American nonsmokers die from illness linked to second-hand smoke, each year.
- A heavy smoker nearly doubles the risk of lung cancer for a non-smoking spouse.

"Smoking is very bad for your baby."

- Some toxic components of cigarette smoke cross the placenta.
- Smoking during pregnancy increases the risk of spontaneous abortion, low birth weight, and sudden infant death syndrome.

"Your smoking affects your children's health."

- Infants ingest nicotine with breast milk if the mother smokes.
- Evidence of nicotine can be found in urine samples of infants when a household member smokes.
- Infants and children exposed to ambient smoke are at a greatly increased risk for bronchitis or pneumonia.
- Children whose mother smoked during pregnancy are at 30% higher risk of leukemia and lymphoma.

"As a father, you should think about what your smoking is doing to your children."

- Children exposed to their father's smoking before birth have increased risk of leukemia, lymphoma, and brain cancer.
- Some research indicates that smoking may alter the quality of sperm.
- Children exposed to environmental tobacco smoke are at increased risk for respiratory illness and infections, impaired development of lung function, and middle ear infections.

