

# CAMPAIGN For TOBACCO-FREE Kids<sup>®</sup>

## HOW SMOKING QUICKLY HARMS YOUR BODY

Many people think that the serious physical harms from smoking don't appear until at least middle age. But just a few puffs of a cigarette quickly affects every system of the body. In a relatively short period of time, casual smoking can quickly cause a wide range of significant, sometimes permanent harms.

### Rapid Addiction:

- Serious symptoms of addiction, sometimes after smoking only a few cigarettes.

### Rapid Immune System Effects:

- More sick visits to the doctor due to increased vulnerability to illnesses.
- Slowed wound healing resulting in longer recovery time from minor and serious injuries.
- More frequent ear and sinus infections, colds, and pneumonias.

### Rapid Lung Effects:

- Difficulty breathing due to airway tightening.
- Wheezing, persistent coughs, asthma attacks, and increased phlegm production.
- Lower exercise tolerance.

### Rapid Heart Effects:

- Increased bad fat deposition in blood vessels leading to early heart disease. (Bad fats include: low density lipoproteins, triglycerides, and cholesterol).
- Clot formation and narrowing of blood vessels, increasing the risk of heart attack or stroke.
- Faster heart rate and compromised blood flow to the heart.
- Increased blood pressure, leading to organ damage.

### Rapid Mouth and Stomach Effects:

- Bad breath
- Heartburn
- Gum disease
- Acid Reflux
- Tooth decay
- Ulcers

### Rapid Effects on the Brain

- Decreased blood flow to the brain, resulting in increased risk of stroke.
- Increased stress.
- Alteration of brain chemistry, leading to increased cravings.

### Other Rapid Effects:

- Vitamin deficiencies and their associated symptoms.
- Pre-cancerous gene mutations.
- Dangerous drug interactions.

For more detailed information and specific source references, see the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids white paper, *Smoking's Immediate Effects on Your Body*, available at the Campaign web site, <http://tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/index.php?CategoryID=13>.

### Other Related Campaign Fact Sheets (available at <http://tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets>).

- *The Path to Smoking Addiction Starts at Very Young Ages*
- *Tobacco Harm to Kids*
- *Smoking and Decreased Physical Performance*
- *Smoking & Kids*
- *Tobacco Use Among Youth*
- *Health Harms from Tobacco Use*

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*This fact sheet was originally developed by Dr. Jen Doe and Dr. Chris DeSanto from Georgetown Hospital's community pediatrics program while serving as interns at the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, with subsequent work done by Dr. Stacey Cohn during a separate internship at the Campaign.*