

## SMOKING CAUSES HEART DISEASE



**Front of Cigarette Pack  
(representation only)**



**Back of Cigarette Pack  
(representation only)**

Smoking is a major cause of heart disease.<sup>1</sup> The two main forms of coronary heart disease are heart attack and angina.<sup>2</sup> Atherosclerosis is the main underlying problem in coronary heart disease.<sup>1,2</sup> Atherosclerosis occurs when there is narrowing and clogging of the arteries which reduces blood supply, and the amount of oxygen available, throughout the body.<sup>3</sup> For more information on atherosclerosis go to the *Smoking clogs your arteries* fact sheet.

Smokers have more heart attacks, repeat heart attacks and angina (over 20 times more angina) than do non-smokers. Smokers also have heart attacks at a much younger age than non-smokers.<sup>4</sup>

People who smoke are up to four times more likely to die from coronary heart disease than non-smokers.<sup>3</sup> The number of years you smoke and the number of cigarettes smoked increases this risk.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the effects smoking has on atherosclerosis, each time you smoke (even just one cigarette) you make your heart work harder by:

- Increasing your heart rate
- Decreasing the oxygen carried in your blood – with each inhalation of cigarette smoke, oxygen is replaced by carbon monoxide and other gases
- Short-term increase in blood pressure<sup>1,4</sup>

There were around 355,600 Australians with coronary heart disease in 2001. Coronary heart disease is the largest single cause of death in Australia. It is also the

most common cause of sudden death.<sup>2</sup> In 2004, there were 24,576 deaths in Australia from coronary heart disease. It accounted for 18.5% of all deaths.<sup>5</sup>

A heart attack is often fatal and 4 in 10 Australians die within a year of having a heart attack.<sup>2,6</sup>

Quitting smoking will **reduce** your chance of developing heart disease. After one year of not smoking your risk of heart disease is halved. Fifteen years after stopping smoking your risk of heart disease is the same as a non-smoker.<sup>3,7</sup>

Even if you already have heart disease, stopping smoking is the single most important thing you can do to reduce your risk of further coronary heart disease.<sup>8</sup>

The risk of coronary heart disease is not reduced by smoking low-tar or low-nicotine cigarettes rather than regular cigarettes.<sup>3</sup>

Smoking around your family can also affect their health. Non-smokers living with smokers have about a 25% to 30% increase in both the risk of coronary heart disease and death from heart attack.<sup>1,9,10</sup>

Decided to quit? For help, talk to your doctor or pharmacist, call the Quitline on 131 848 or visit the Quitline web site at [www.quitnow.info.au](http://www.quitnow.info.au).

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