

SMOKING CAUSES PERIPHERAL VASCULAR DISEASE



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



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

Smoking damages the blood vessels throughout the body, including the extremities. Damage to the blood vessels supplying the arms and legs leads to a condition known as Peripheral Vascular Disease (PVD). PVD most commonly occurs in the legs and feet, but it can also develop in the arms and hands.¹

People may have PVD without the usual symptoms of pain, but the most common symptom of PVD is intermittent severe pain, usually in the legs when exercising.² This pain may also be present when not exercising. In the later stages of PVD, open sores in the legs and feet may not heal and can progress to gangrene or the death of the affected tissue. In severe cases, amputation may be necessary for relief of pain and to prevent the development of gangrene.¹

If you have PVD, continuing to smoke during treatment is likely to result in less successful treatment than if you were not smoking.¹

There are around 10,000 new cases of PVD each year and about 70,000 Australians live with the disease.³ More than 2,500 Australians died from PVD in 2002.⁴

Someone who has ever smoked is more than four times as likely as a non-smoker to develop PVD and current smokers are more than 11 times more likely than non-smokers to suffer from PVD.⁵

Smoking causes 68% of PVD among males and 61% among females.⁵

If you start smoking at or before the age of 16 there is evidence that you more than double your risk of developing PVD, regardless of the amount you smoke.⁶

Quitting smoking will reduce your chance of developing PVD.

Decided to quit smoking? For help, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or call the Quitline on 131 848 or visit the Quitline web site at www.quitnow.info.au.

Sources

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