

## CIGAR SMOKING CAUSES MOUTH AND THROAT CANCER



**Front of Cigar Package  
(representation only)**



**Back of Cigar Package  
(representation only)**

Smoking cigars is associated with an increased risk of oral cancers, including the lips, tongue, mouth, throat, larynx and oesophagus.<sup>1</sup>

More than 80% of cancers of the mouth, nose and throat occur in people who smoke cigarettes, cigars or pipes.<sup>2</sup>

A total of 2,052 Australians died from mouth and throat cancer in 2003<sup>3</sup> and there are over 4,000 new cases of these cancers each year.<sup>4</sup>

For cigar smokers, the risk of developing these cancers is influenced by such things as the number of cigars smoked, whether you inhale the smoke and how much you inhale, as well as how long it takes you to smoke the cigar.<sup>5</sup>

Whether or not you inhale, when you smoke cigars you directly expose the lips, mouth, tongue, throat and larynx to smoke and its carcinogens. Even holding an unlit cigar between the lips will expose these areas to carcinogens. The oesophagus is also exposed when saliva that contains elements found in smoke is swallowed.<sup>1</sup>

Your risk from smoking cigars increases with increased exposure. For example, compared with someone who has never smoked:

- smoking one to two cigars per day doubles your risk for oral and oesophageal cancers
- smoking three to four cigars daily can increase your risk of oral cancers more than eight times and increases your chance of oesophageal cancer four times.<sup>1</sup>

Smoking cigars is not a safe alternative to smoking cigarettes. Cigar smokers have a similar level of risk for oral, throat and oesophageal cancers to that of cigarette smokers.<sup>1,5,6</sup>

Cigar smokers also have higher levels of gum disease (periodontitis) and tooth loss than non-smokers.<sup>7</sup> Cigar smoke can also stain your teeth and tongue as well as cause bad breath.<sup>8</sup>

Quitting smoking can significantly reduce your risk of oral cancer and improve your dental health.<sup>1</sup>

Five years after you quit smoking completely the risks of cancers of the mouth, throat and oesophagus are halved.<sup>5</sup>

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](http://www.quitnow.info.au).

### **Sources**

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