

Health Advice - Quit Smoking Early



Cover
Story

You may probably notice that a new series of health warning has appeared on the packet of tobacco products on sale in the market. These health warnings are not only larger in size, but also more colourful images and photos, so that smokers can have an even clearer understanding of the consequences of smoking.

The new series of health warnings communicate six themes. Apart from retaining the old theme "SMOKING CAUSES LUNG CANCER" and "SMOKING KILLS", four new themes, namely "SMOKING HARMS YOUR FAMILY", "SMOKING CAUSES PERIPHERAL VASCULAR DISEASES", "SMOKING MAY CAUSE IMPOTENCE" and "SMOKING CAN ACCELERATE AGEING OF SKIN" are also incorporated.

You may probably know for a long time that smoking can cause lung cancer, but did you know that smoking can cause impotence and accelerate ageing of skin? What are peripheral vascular diseases? Let us have a look.

Do you know...

According to the newly revised "Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance", all retail tobacco products must display pictorial health warnings on the packet or retail containers with effect from 27 October 2007. The followings are some of the provisions pertaining to the new health warnings:

- The Chinese and English version of the health warning should appear on the 2 largest surfaces of the cigarette packet.
- The health warning and description on tar and nicotine contents must be rectangular with black lines on each side. The warning must cover at least 50% of the area of the surface on which the warning appears.
- Each brand of tobacco products must display the six health warnings in equal numbers in 12 consecutive months.
- The health warning as well as the tar and nicotine content description must not be covered by any stickers or labels on the packaging.

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控煙 Issue No. 15
Tobacco Control Bulletin 專訊



衛生署控煙辦公室
Tobacco Control Office
Department of Health



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If you would like to receive the Tobacco Control Bulletin by post / email*, please fill in the reply slip and fax it to 2575 8944, or by mail addressed 18/F & 25/F, Wu Chung House, 213, Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, to the Tobacco Control Office.

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____ Contact No: _____

* Please delete the inappropriate.

Smoking causes lung cancer

As early as the 1960s, medical researches had confirmed that smoking was the main cause of lung cancer. The carcinogenic substances in the smoke will affect the normal functions of the cells, causing mutation of the genetic substances and resulting in cancer. Scientists have confirmed that the more one smokes, the greater the risk of lung cancer¹.

In Hong Kong, lung cancer is the No.1 fatal cancer, and smoking is the main cause of lung cancer. In 2005, over 3,000 people died of lung cancer - accounting for about 30% of all cancer deaths². A local study found that of men aged over 65 in Hong Kong, the probability among smokers dying of lung cancer is five times higher than non-smokers. Meanwhile, people who have quit smoking is only half as likely to die of lung cancer than smokers³.

Although the treatments of lung cancer are much more effective with the advances in medicine than before, the death rate is still high once one acquired lung cancer. As prevention is better than cure, the most effective way of preventing lung cancer is quitting smoking.

Smoking kills

Does smoking cause lung cancer only? Certainly not! Smoking has been proven to be associated with a variety of cancers, such as oral cancer, throat cancer, esophagus cancer, stomach cancer, pancreas cancer, kidney cancer, bladder cancer, cervical cancer and leukemia etc.¹. Moreover, smoking can also cause other fatal diseases such as heart diseases, strokes and pneumonia.

In fact, the World Health Organization has clearly stated that smoking causes 5 million deaths worldwide every year. It has also warned that if the situation regarding smoking does not change, as many as 10 million people will die of diseases caused by smoking in 2020. Indeed, in every two smokers, one of them will die of diseases caused by smoking⁴!

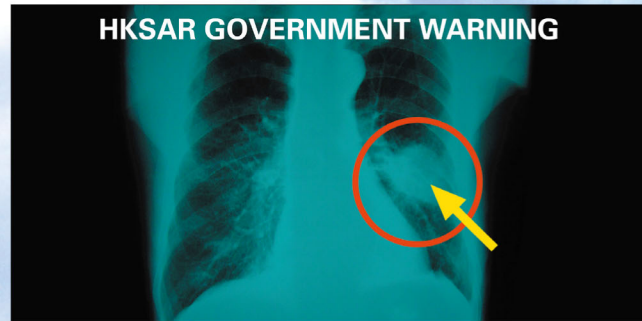
So is it really worthwhile to take such high risk of death just for smoking?

Smoking harms your family

Smoking not only harms the smokers' health, it also affects their family. Secondhand smoke causes lung cancer and heart diseases. To the youngster it will cause permanent damage to their lung development and is associated with asthma, inflammation of the middle ear (otitis media) and the respiratory system. Moreover, in pregnant women, secondhand smoke can cause complications, such as premature birth and birth of underweight babies. Secondhand smoke can kill babies too⁵.

Smoking can also affect the financial status of the family. According to research from World Health Organization, low income families usually spend a higher percentage of their income on tobacco products than high income families. As a result, the quality of life of other family members, such as food and education for children, is sacrificed⁶. Moreover, when a smoker falls ill because of smoking, his ability to work is undermined and his medical spending may further worsen the family's financial situation. In addition, the family members will also worry about the health of the smoker.

Although it is a personal decision to smoke, the consequences have to be borne by the whole family.



SMOKING CAUSES LUNG CANCER

TAR : mg NICOTINE : mg



SMOKING KILLS

TAR : mg NICOTINE : mg



SMOKING HARMS YOUR FAMILY

TAR : mg NICOTINE : mg



HKSAR GOVERNMENT WARNING



SMOKING CAUSES PERIPHERAL VASCULAR DISEASES

TAR : mg NICOTINE : mg

Smoking causes peripheral vascular diseases

Peripheral vascular diseases refer to the pathology caused by the blockage of blood vessels in the limbs. The symptoms include intermittent claudication and foot pain, limbs turning cold and changing colour, numbness and failure of wound healing.

Smoking is one of the main causes of peripheral vascular diseases. The toxins in the tobacco will damage the internal wall of blood vessels, causing the accumulation of fat and formation of blood clots, leading to the blockage of blood vessels. If there are wounds in the limbs, the healing of the wounds will be slowed down due to insufficient blood supply. In severe cases, there will be complications such as ulcers and gangrene, resulting in limb amputation¹.

To reduce or prevent peripheral vascular diseases, the most important measure is to quit smoking at once.

HKSAR GOVERNMENT WARNING



SMOKING MAY CAUSE IMPOTENCE

TAR : mg NICOTINE : mg

Smoking may cause impotence

The nicotine in tobacco causes contraction of blood vessels, affecting blood circulation and causing disorders such as heart diseases and stroke. Nicotine also affects blood circulation in the penis, and thus hinders erection.

A local study found that among men aged between 31 and 60 in Hong Kong, the chances of smokers suffering from impotence is 50% higher than non-smokers. The result is similar to oversea studies⁷. Another local study also found that the longer and more one smokes, the chances of having impotence will be greater⁸.

Smoking will not make you look smarter. It will only make you "down".

HKSAR GOVERNMENT WARNING



SMOKING CAN ACCELERATE AGEING OF SKIN

TAR : mg NICOTINE : mg

Smoking can accelerate ageing of skin

A lot of people take their appearance very seriously, and try their best to prevent ageing of their skin. However, researches found that smoking can accelerate aging of the skin. As a result, smokers have more wrinkles on their face than non-smokers, especially around the corner of the eyes and the lips. Scientists explained that smoking will affect blood circulation to the face, causing a shortage of oxygen in the skin and lowering its ability to produce collagen. Moreover, the repeated sucking movement of the mouth during smoking can also increase the wrinkles around the corner of the lips. This makes smokers look older than non-smokers of the same age⁹.

Although quitting smoking will not make the wrinkles disappear immediately, it is still better than trying your best to care for your skin while at the same time ruining it by smoking. This is ridiculous, as well as a waste of time, effort and money.



The reasons and effectiveness of implementing pictorial health warnings

Health warnings on tobacco products are effective means to convey messages to smokers. If a smoker smokes one pack of cigarettes a day, he will have as many as 7,300 chances a year (20 times x 365 days) to see the health warnings on the cigarette packet. To non-smokers, the conspicuous health warnings serve to remind them about the disastrous consequences of smoking¹⁰.

As a result, most countries have already made it mandatory for tobacco products to display various kinds of health warning. In the past few years, many countries (Table 1) have stepped up the requirements for health warnings tobacco products, including enlarging the area of health warnings on the packet, and incorporating graphical contents. In fact, the World Health Organization's "Framework Convention on Tobacco Control" (FCTC) requires participating countries to regulate health warnings on their tobacco products within three years. These warnings should cover at least half (or at least 30%) of the visible parts of the packet. They can also consider using pictorial warnings.

List 1: Countries or regions that have implemented (or will implement) pictorial health warnings^{13, 14}

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Asia Pacific | Singapore, Thailand, Australia, Jordan, India, Hong Kong, New Zealand |
| Europe | Belgium, Romania*, Finland*, UK* |
| America | Canada, Brazil, Venezuela, Uruguay, Chile |

* To be implemented in 2008

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Researches show that smokers often underestimate the harmful effect of smoking on their health. Hence, the use of pictorial health warnings can effectively and realistically portray the harmful effect of smoking and give them greater motivation to quit smoking¹¹. Some people worried that these graphical health warnings would make the smokers feel uneasy or offended and hence a reverse effect. However, studies showed that the smokers, who fear or have negative feelings towards the health warnings, were more likely to smoke less or even attempted quit smoking.

For the smokers who tried to avoid seeing the health warnings (e.g. using a cigarette box, obstruct or cover the health warning, or deliberately avoid buying certain cigarettes that have certain health warnings on the packet), they actually have the same understanding about the content of the health warnings as those who do not have such avoidance behaviours¹².

Quit smoking early. Don't hesitate

We hope that after learning about all these health advices, you would reconsider the consequences that smoking would bring to you and your family, and thus make a wise choice and quit smoking early. If you have any queries about smoking cessation or need assistance, please call the Department of Health Smoking Cessation Hotline at 1833 183.

Kicking the Smoking Habit

With the further extension of no smoking areas, more and more people agree that smokefree is the big trend. Meanwhile, there has been a significant increase in the number of people using the Department of Health Smoking Cessation Hotline. Among the people attending the smoking cessation clinics of the Department of Health, many of them said that they decided to quit smoking because more and more public venues have become no smoking area.

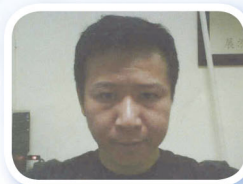
We have invited some people who have successfully quit smoking to share their insights and experiences with us. Here are their valuable experiences and their joy of success for everyone to share:



"I quit smoking because I didn't want to be bounded by the law, and I was also encouraged by my family and colleagues."
- Mr Tsui

"My advice to smokers and people trying to quit smoking: refrain from buying cigarettes, and don't go to pub for the time being. If you want to enjoy good health you must quit smoking. And you must persevere."
- Mr Ding.

"I started smoking at the age of 24, and have smoked for 25 years. Reason: influenced by my family and relatives, thought that smoking can improve my thinking, and provide a pastime for my leisure. Experience in quitting smoking: failure due to my tendency to be influenced by emotional ups and downs, lack of will power, and the friends around. As the saying goes, 'you won't shed tears until you see a coffin', later I had to undergo an operation to relieve the water accumulated in my mid-ears. As the number of operations grew, the ailment soon became incurable. Smoking would only increase the accumulation of water. After succeeding in quitting smoking this time, I feel that the air has become fresher, my breathing smoother, and my phlegm scarcer. My advice to smokers: avoid smoking at all costs - otherwise your health and wealth will be at stake."
- Mr Wong



"When I was 15, I tried smoking under the influence of peers and working environment. Then it turned into a habit. After quitting smoking, my health returned to normal, and I was even stronger than before. From now on, I can enter any restaurant, entertainment venue and indoor environment freely."
- Mr Chow

"I started smoking at 18 under my friend's influence. Reason for failure: insufficient determination. Reason for success this time: my determination and the help of the Smoking Ordinance. My advice for smokers and people wanting to quit smoking: determination and perseverance."
- Miss Chan.

" Use your own will power, and continue to quit smoking with the support of your family and colleagues. Now I don't smoke, not even a single cigarette. I am so happy!"
- Miss Leung

"As long as you have the determination, you will succeed in quitting smoking."
- Mr Yip.



I Love Smokefree Beaches

The hot summer is the ideal season for swimming. But if there is tobacco smoke in the sea breeze, who would like to stay in this kind of beach? Luckily, all beaches under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) have been designated as no smoking beaches with effect from 1 January 2007. The no smoking areas include coastal areas covered by sand and stone, swimming areas, rafts, shower facilities, as well as barbecue sites, campsites and children's playgrounds on the beaches.

To remind the public that smoking is prohibited on beaches, the Tobacco Control Office has launched in July an "I Love Smokefree Beaches" publicity campaign. Apart from broadcasting publicity messages on TV and radio and announcing smokefree messages on the beaches, Tobacco Control Inspectors also patrol the beaches managed by LCSD, and distribute leaflets and cute souvenirs to the public to remind them about the new no smoking regulations for beaches.



Tobacco Control Inspectors distributing quit-smoking leaflets to the public on the beaches.



API and poster of "I Love Smokefree Beaches"



Enforcement Update

It has been over a year since the extension of no smoking areas came into effect on 1 January 2007, and everybody has probably accustomed to the new smokefree culture and been enjoying the benefits of a smokefree environment. While the majority of smokers would obey the regulations, there are still some smokers who contravened the law by smoking in no smoking areas. As at the end of December 2007, the Tobacco Control Office had received over 17,000 complaints about unlawful smoking and about 13,000 telephone enquiries.

| Types of no smoking areas | Number of summons* |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Games centres | 1001 |
| Shopping centres | 265 |
| Shop | 327 |
| Restaurants | 574 |
| Parks | 240 |
| Other statutory non-smoking areas. | 981 |
| Total | 3388 |

* including the summons issued or to be issued between January and December



WORDS FROM EDITOR



Greetings again from Tobacco Control Bulletin! In the cover story of this issue, we have introduced the pictorial health warnings on the packet of tobacco products, and explained why we are implementing pictorial health warnings and its effectiveness. In our Quit Smoking Corner, we have invited several people who had successfully quit smoking to share their successful stories with you. As winter approaches, Local Tobacco Control News revisited the "I Love Smokefree Beaches" publicity events and the enforcement status of new legislation. Of course our Games World will play games with you and test your understanding of the new pictorial health warnings.

In addition, we have introduced a new section called Tobacco Control Stories. We hope that by sharing the experiences of the Tobacco Control Inspectors - you can have a better understanding of the new legislation and the daily operations of the Tobacco Control Office.



Tobacco Control stories



Tobacco Control Inspectors patrolling no smoking areas.

Are residential buildings and shops on upper floors no smoking areas?

As the main institution enforcing the "Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance", Tobacco Control Inspectors of the Tobacco Control Office frequently inspect various no smoking areas and assist venue manager to enforce the no smoking measures. To give you a better picture of the work of Tobacco Control Inspectors, the "Tobacco Control Bulletin" will, starting from this issue, have a new section "Tobacco Control Stories" to share some real stories with you.

Some people may have the wrong impression that the upper floors of residential buildings or commercial buildings are private premises and Tobacco Control Inspectors will not come to enforce the law. This is a wrong concept because any indoor workplace, indoor public areas (including the public areas in residential buildings) and the interior of restaurants, whether on G/F or above, are considered to be statutory no smoking areas. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Tobacco Control Inspectors will carry out inspection and if anyone is found to be smoking in a no smoking area, they will issue summons to the offenders.

Let's take a restaurant on the 1/F of a commercial-residential building in Central as an example. We received a complaint from a citizen that a restaurant customer was smoking in the restaurant. Tobacco Control Inspectors made a surprise visit during lunchtime. As the inspectors entered the unit, they found a lot of customers having lunch, while some of them are smoking. After explaining to the smokers the provisions of the Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance, the inspectors issued summons to five persons who had smoked. On the other hand, the inspectors also reminded the restaurant managers that the premises was a no smoking area, and they should make sure that nobody is smoking in the restaurant. The inspectors also provided anti-smoking publicity materials to the managers and asked them to put up the no smoking signage at prominent locations to remind customers not to smoke inside that restaurant.



game zone

SMOKE-FREE FUN WORLD

The Cover Story in this issue carries a detailed feature on the regulations and content of the new pictorial health warnings. Smoke-free Fun World has prepared some questions to test your knowledge about the health warnings. Please circle the correct answer and fax it together with your name, address and contact telephone number to 2575 8944, or mail it to the Tobacco Control Office at 18/F and 25/F, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong on or before 15 April 2008. **Readers who have all answers all the correct will receive a souvenir***. All are welcome.

* while stock lasts

- How many pictorial health warnings are there?
a. 5 b. 6 c. 7
- What shape must the pictorial health warnings be?
a. rectangle b. square c. triangle
- The health advice on the packet or retail containers of tobacco products (except single cigars) must cover at least ____ of the total display areas.
a. 50% b. 60% c. 70%
- What is Hong Kong's No.1 fatal cancer? What is its main cause?
a. lung cancer, smoking b. rectal cancer, unhealthy eating
c. liver cancer, carrier of Hepatitis B virus
- What effect will smoking have on men's sexual performance?
a. increase fertility b. increase the probability of having a baby girl
c. increase the likelihood of impotence
- Which of the following is NOT an effect of smoking on the family?
a. subject family members to secondhand smoking
b. worsen the financial situation of low-income families
c. reduce the likelihood of children suffering from asthma
- For every two smokers, how many will die of smoking an average?
a. none b. one c. two
- Apart from lung cancer, what other types of cancer will smoking cause?
a. cervical cancer, kidney cancer, bladder cancer, pancreas cancer
b. esophagus cancer, stomach cancer, oral cancer, throat cancer
c. all of the above

Name: _____ Tel: _____

Address: _____

Answer for last issue

Are outdoor areas of the following venues statutory no smoking areas?

| Places | No smoking areas | |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Universities | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> indoor | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> outdoor |
| 2. Parks managed by Leisure and Culture Services Department | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> indoor | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> outdoor |
| 3. Beaches managed by Leisure and Culture Services Department | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> indoor | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> outdoor |
| 4. Escalators | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> indoor | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> outdoor |
| 5. The Hong Kong Wetland Park | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> indoor | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> outdoor |
| 6. Mong Kok Stadium | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> indoor | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> outdoor |
| 7. Hospitals | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> indoor | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> outdoor |
| 8. Markets | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> indoor | <input type="checkbox"/> outdoor |
| 9. Secondary schools | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> indoor | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> outdoor |
| 10. Shopping malls | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> indoor | <input type="checkbox"/> outdoor |