

What you need to know about Smoking

Cigarette smoke contains several substances that can cause many illnesses, from pneumonia to cancer. In Brazil, about 1 out of 4 people has the habit of smoking, and approximately 200.000 deaths per year are attributed to the use of cigarettes.

Addiction, what is it?

Among the substances contained in a cigarette, nicotine is the one that causes addiction. It is quickly absorbed by the lungs and carried into the brain, where it creates pleasant effects which will lead to addiction with extended use. When an addicted person avoids smoking for a variable period of time, withdrawal symptoms will take place such as anxiety, irritability, hunger, difficulty in concentrating and sleep disorders, among others.

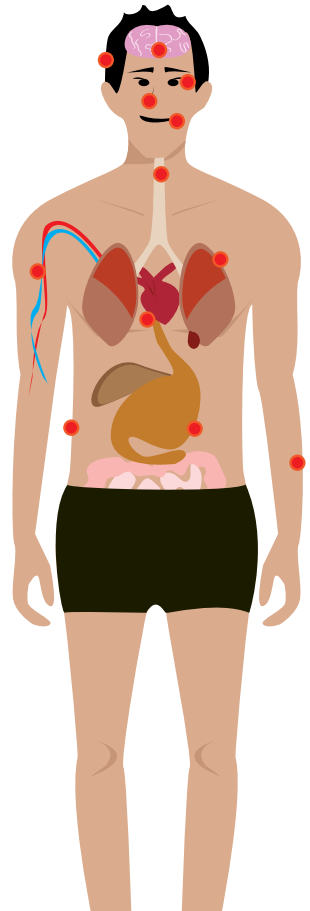
What does smoking addiction cause to the health?

Several illnesses can come out as a result of or be worsened by cigarettes. Among these diseases, the most common are:

1-Cancer: About 30% of cancer deaths are due to cigarette smoking. Contrary to

the common sense, cigarette smoking is responsible not only for lung cancer, but also cancer in the larynx, oral cavity, esophagus, pancreas, bladder, kidneys, stomach, uterine cervix, and leukemia as well.

2- Cardiovascular diseases: cigarettes are responsible for myocardial infarction, stroke and aneurysm, among others. Besides that, if the person has



high blood pressure, smoking may worsen it.

3- Pulmonary disease: Smoking greatly increases the chances of lung infections. Tuberculosis is the most severe infection associated with cigarette use. Other lung diseases such as bronchitis, asthma and emphysema also may be caused or worsened by cigarettes.

In addition to the group above, several other diseases have



their risk increased in smokers such as ulcers in the stomach and intestines, diabetes and osteoporosis. It also worsens lupus skin lesions (discoid lupus), besides interfering with the chloroquine effectiveness.

What are the benefits of quitting smoking?

Smoking cessation is beneficial at any age. Those who stop smoking before the age of 50 have about half the chances of dying in the next 15 years compared to those who haven't giving up the habit. After 10 years without smoking, the risk of lung cancer is about half compared to those who continue smoking. Shortly after quitting, the risk of myocardial infarction decreases considerably, and after a few years, it is about the same as those who have never smoked.

How to quit?

Most smokers would like to stop, but it is hard to accomplish it without help. Quitting smoking is not easy. It may require medical support, but above all, a strong willpower. The Federal Government has programs for the cessation of smoking. If you want to quit smoking, go to the nearest health center to get further information.

It's worth it!