

Smoking Harms the Body Quickly

Many people, particularly young people, think that the serious physical harms from smoking don't appear until at least middle age. But just a few puffs of a cigarette quickly affect every system of the body. Casual smoking can quickly cause a wide range of significant and sometimes permanent harm to the body:

RAPID ADDICTION

- ⊗ Serious symptoms of addiction, sometimes after smoking only a few cigarettes.

RAPID IMMUNE SYSTEM EFFECTS

- ⊗ More frequent ear and sinus infections, colds, and pneumonias;
- ⊗ More sick visits to the doctor due to increased vulnerability to illnesses;
- ⊗ Slowed wound healing resulting in longer recovery time from minor and serious injuries.

RAPID LUNG EFFECTS

- ⊗ Difficulty breathing due to airway tightening;
- ⊗ Wheezing, persistent coughs, asthma attacks, and increased phlegm production;
- ⊗ Lower exercise tolerance.

RAPID HEART EFFECTS

- ⊗ Faster heart rate and compromised blood flow to the heart;

RAPID MOUTH & STOMACH EFFECTS

- ⊗ Bad breath;
- ⊗ Tooth decay and gum disease;
- ⊗ Heartburn;
- ⊗ Ulcers.

RAPID EFFECTS ON THE BRAIN

- ⊗ Decreased blood flow to the brain, resulting in increased risk of stroke;
- ⊗ Increased stress.

OTHER RAPID EFFECTS

- ⊗ Vitamin deficiencies and their associated symptoms.

Adapted from *How Smoking Quickly Harms the Body*, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, 2004. For more detailed information see the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids white paper, *Smoking's Immediate Effects on Your Body*, available at <http://tobaccofreekids.org/research/factsheets/index.php?CategoryID=13>