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Smoking and Lung Disease

Definition

Smoking refers to the deliberate inhalation of smoke from tobacco or other substances. Smoking has a well established relationship with Lung Disease, in particular lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (emphysema).

Description

Smoking has a variety of damaging effects on the lungs and air passages. These include:

- Irritation of the airways.
- Paralysis of the cilia, small hairs in the lungs that normally move mucus to be coughed out or swallowed.
- Stimulation of excess mucus production.
- Inhibition of defensive cells in the airways.

All these factors increase the chances of a smoker becoming infected by viruses and bacteria, causing chronic infection in the lungs. In the long-term, Smoking causes changes to the cells which line the air passages.

Treatment options

The best way to avoid smoking-induced lung damage is to quit. See the Anti-smoking Products topic on the Healthpoint and ask your Doctor or Pharmacist for advice.

Diet hints

See the Smoker's Diet topic on the Healthpoint for advice about healthy eating when giving up smoking.

Vitamins/minerals/herbs

- Avoid taking beta carotene, as taking regular doses of this supplement has been linked to a possible increased risk of lung cancer in smokers.
- Chamomile and valerian may help relieve restlessness and anxiety you may experience when giving up smoking.
- There are products available that contain a variety of herbs, vitamins, minerals and amino acids designed to help relieve the restlessness and anxiety that may be associated with giving up smoking, support the immune system and replace depleted vitamins and minerals in people who have given up smoking.

Organisations & support groups

For more help and information see the Smoking Support Groups topic on the Health point.

Pharmacist's advice

- 1) Ask your Pharmacist for advice on how to stop smoking.
- 2) Ask your Pharmacist about anti-smoking products such as **nicotine chewing gum, nicotine patches, nasal sprays and inhalers**. Your Pharmacist can explain how to use these products correctly. See the Anti-smoking Products topic on the Healthpoint for further information.

DISCLAIMER : This information is an educational aid only. It is not intended to replace medical advice for individual conditions or treatments. Talk to your doctor, pharmacist, nurse or naturopath before following any medical regimen to see whether it is safe and effective for you.