



FOREVER
FREE™...for Baby and Me

A Guide To Remaining Smoke Free



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Booklet 4: Smoking & Health

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This is Booklet 4 in the Forever Free for Baby and Me series. This booklet covers how smoking affects the health of you and your baby. It also talks about how your family's health gets better now that you have stopped smoking. Many people quit smoking because they are worried about the health effects of smoking. For people who quit for other reasons (such as the cost), the health effects of quitting are a bonus.

How Harmful is Smoking?

Why are we giving you a booklet about smoking and health? You most likely know that smoking is not healthy for you and your baby. Perhaps you even quit smoking for that reason. So why *are* we giving you this booklet? Because you asked for it. We have worked with many women who said they were told that smoking was bad for their baby. But they told us that no one gave them information about how smoking affects their children. Ex-smokers like yourself also have told us that they want more information about how *quitting* smoking *improves* their health. We will try to give you details in this booklet.

Smoking is very dangerous! On average, smoking takes about 14.5 years off a woman's life. We can break down that number even more.

- ◆ 10% of smokers die before age 55, compared to only 4% of nonsmokers.
- ◆ 28% of smokers die before age 65, compared to 11% of nonsmokers.
- ◆ 57% of smokers die before age 75, compared to 30% of nonsmokers.



*Think about that last number.
Most nonsmokers live beyond age 75. But most smokers are dead by then!*

These numbers do not tell us who will live and who will die. We know that about 30-50% of all smokers will die of a disease caused by smoking. If you see 3 people smoking cigarettes, chances are that at least one of them will die from smoking. "**One in three**" are very high odds. The odds of dying in a car accident are only about 1 in 50. The odds of being murdered are about 1 in 100. Most people think these odds are too high. So they wear safety belts while driving. They lock their doors at night. But many of these same people are willing to risk 1 chance in 3 that they will be killed by smoking.

Smoking kills over 400,000 Americans every year. That means that more people are killed by smoking than are killed by alcohol, cocaine, heroin, homicide, suicide, car accidents, fires, and AIDS...COMBINED! By quitting smoking, you have greatly reduced your chance of being one of these numbers!



What Makes Smoking So Harmful?

Cigarette smoke contains over 4,000 chemicals. You might be surprised at some of them. Some of these are:

- ◆ cyanide (a deadly poison)
- ◆ arsenic (poison)
- ◆ strychnine (poison)
- ◆ formaldehyde (a chemical used to preserve dead tissue)
- ◆ methanol (wood alcohol)
- ◆ acetylene (the fuel used in torches)
- ◆ ammonia (what you might use to clean your toilet)
- ◆ acetone (the chemical in nail polish remover)



At least 43 of the chemicals in cigarette smoke are known to cause cancer. Another 401 of these chemicals are toxic or harmful. These chemicals are found in tobacco. Some are added by the makers of cigarettes as preservatives or to enhance flavor.

The most harmful part of cigarette smoke is **carbon monoxide** (CO). This is a colorless, odorless gas. It is very harmful because it replaces oxygen in your blood. Your organs, such as your heart and brain, need oxygen to live. When you smoke, CO prevents these organs from getting all the oxygen that they need.

The decrease in oxygen caused by smoking makes your heart work harder. It puts stress on it. This increases your risk for heart disease. Now that you have stopped smoking, you may have found that you can take deeper breaths. You can exercise longer without getting tired! This is because you are no longer putting CO into your body. Your body is getting more oxygen instead.



Another harmful chemical in cigarette smoke is **nicotine**. This is the drug that makes cigarettes addicting. It also has bad effects on your body. It increases your pulse rate and blood pressure. This means that your heart has to work harder and needs more oxygen. Over time, this stress on the heart may lead to heart disease, too. Heart disease, including heart attacks, is the #1 killer of women in the United States. Smokers have at least twice the chance of having a heart attack as nonsmokers. In fact, new research shows that smokers in their 30's and 40's are 5 times more likely to have heart attacks. Smokers are also more likely to have atherosclerosis (clogged and narrowed arteries), stroke, and embolism (clots in brain or lung).



Remember that nicotine is a poison. A small drop of pure nicotine can be enough to kill a person. In fact, nicotine is used in bug sprays.

The rest of the chemicals in cigarette smoke are referred to as "**tars**." Tars increase a smoker's risk of getting many cancers. These include cancers of the lung, mouth, larynx, esophagus, pancreas, kidney, bladder, stomach, and cervix (the opening to the uterus or womb). Smoking accounts for 30% of all cancer deaths in the United States. This includes about 87% of all deaths from lung cancer. In fact, since 1987, more women die each year from lung cancer than from any other cancer, including breast cancer.

Tars build up inside the lungs of a smoker. Tars prevent the lungs from cleaning themselves. This leads to diseases such as chronic bronchitis, emphysema, lung disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Smokers are also more likely to suffer from asthma and pneumonia.



Smoking and You

By now, you have learned some of the ways that smoking is harmful to all people. But women face special problems if they smoke. Women who smoke tend to have more trouble getting pregnant. They are more likely to have early menopause. Smoking is also related to osteoporosis, which means that the bones become weak, thin, and easily break.

Smoking poses many dangers for the pregnant woman, such as more miscarriages, stillbirths, and other pregnancy problems. Smoking by pregnant women causes 115,000 miscarriages and the deaths of 5,600 babies per year in the United States. Women who smoke also have an increased risk of ectopic pregnancy (when the fertilized egg is implanted outside of the womb), placenta previa (when the placenta covers the cervix), and placental abruption (when the placenta separates too early from the womb, taking away all oxygen to the baby).

Last, smoking affects breastfeeding. Heavy smoking harms a mother's milk supply. The nicotine from smoking is passed to the baby in breastmilk. One mother told us:
"What kept me off cigarettes is the thought of giving nicotine to my baby as I nursed. Breastfeeding is a beautiful, natural process and it made it easier for me to stay smoke-free."

Some mothers told us about their battles with miscarriage and other pregnancy problems:

Vanya had three miscarriages. When Vanya became pregnant for the fourth time, she quit smoking right away. In the months after she quit, Vanya told us that she was tempted to smoke. She knew many women who claimed that they smoked during their entire pregnancy and didn't have one problem. At these times, Vanya said that she would think of the emotional pain that she had with each loss of her baby. She told herself that one of the reasons she was quitting was to increase her chances of having a healthy baby. She decided that she was not taking any chances with this pregnancy! After nine months, Vanya was thrilled to have a healthy baby girl. Now, she stays smoke-free for her health and the health of little Maya.



But What Happens When You Quit Smoking?

Enough of the bad news. Now for the good news! Quitting smoking is the *most important* thing that you can do for your health. By quitting smoking, you have added years to your life. You have also increased the quality of your life. You can breathe easier, walk further, exercise more, taste, and smell things better. You feel better when you wake up in the morning. Your breath and clothes smell better. You are healthier as a nonsmoker than you would have been if you kept smoking.



The chart on the next page shows how your body recovers after your last cigarette. You can see that your health quickly starts to improve once you quit. You can also see that the earlier you quit, the greater the chance that you will reduce risks caused by smoking. But quitting smoking improves your health at any age.

The following chart shows a few of the ways that your health improves after quitting smoking. How long would it take to tell you all the ways that quitting helps you? Here's a clue. In 1990, the United States Surgeon General published a report called "The Health Benefits of Smoking Cessation." That report was 928 pages long!

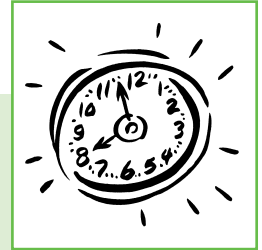
One woman, Vicky, reminds herself of the health benefits she has seen since quitting smoking:

It had been nearly a year since Vicky quit smoking. She was starting to forget how hard it had been to quit. At times, she would see her friends smoking on a break at work, and she would begin to wonder what it would be like to have a cigarette. But then the elevator in Vicky's building broke down. She had to carry her baby and the carrier up six flights of stairs to her apartment. As she opened the door, she found that she was not tired or winded, as she would have been before quitting smoking. This reminded Vicky of how quitting improved her health each day.

List three health benefits that you have seen and felt since you quit smoking:

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

Let's take a look at what happens when you throw away your last cigarette.¹



IMMEDIATE CHANGES:

20 minutes after your last cigarette

- ~ Most of the nicotine has left your brain.
- ~ Your blood pressure and pulse rate go back to normal.

8 hours after your last cigarette

- ~The level of carbon monoxide in your blood has decreased to normal.
- ~The level of oxygen in your blood rises to normal.

24 hours after your last cigarette

- ~Your risk of having a heart attack begins to go down.

2 days after quitting

- ~ You can taste and smell things better.

2 weeks after quitting

- ~Your lungs are working better. You have better blood circulation.

LATER CHANGES:

1 month after quitting

- ~ You cough less and have less shortness of breath.
- ~ You breathe better and are not as tired.

1 year after quitting

- ~Your risk of heart disease has been cut in half.

5 years after quitting

- ~Your risk of dying of lung cancer has been cut in half.
- ~Your risk of oral cancers has also been cut in half.

5-15 years after quitting

- ~Your risk of stroke is about the same as someone who never smoked.

10 years after quitting

- ~Your risk of lung cancer is nearly the same as someone who never smoked. Your risk of pancreatic cancer has also been reduced.

15 years after quitting

- ~Your risk of heart disease is as low as if you never smoked.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

¹ Source: American Cancer Society; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Smoking and Your Baby

Smoking is harmful for you. It is also harmful to your baby. When a pregnant woman smokes, her unborn baby is also smoking. Smoking during pregnancy slows down the normal growth of the fetus. As a result, important fetal organs, such as the brain and the lungs, do not develop as well or as fully as they could. Babies of mothers who smoke get less oxygen and fewer nutrients than other babies do. The baby does not develop as well and is more likely to be born with a smaller brain. Studies also show that smoking during pregnancy can cause the baby to have brain damage, lung damage, and even birth defects (e.g., cleft lip/palate, club foot). Pregnant smokers also have a much greater risk of a premature delivery and their babies have twice the risk of being born with a low birth-weight. Low birth-weight babies can have many problems; they are more likely to have many hospitalizations and they also have an increased risk of death at birth.

At first, Shondra did not plan on quitting smoking for her pregnancy. She had heard that smoking could lead to a low birth-weight baby, but she just thought that might mean an easy labor. Then Shondra's doctor explained all of the health problems that can come along with a low birth-weight baby. The doctor told Shondra that the term "low birth-weight" didn't just mean that the baby would weigh less, it meant that the baby may not develop normally. Shondra saw that having a low birth-weight baby was much more serious than she had thought. She decided that quitting smoking could make a big difference in her baby's health.

The harmful effects of smoking do not stop when the baby is born. Babies and children are greatly affected by secondhand smoke (the smoke of other people). This is because they take in more smoke than adults. Their immune system is at a greater risk when exposed to the chemicals and poisons found in cigarette smoke.

Babies whose parents smoke are 2 to 5 times more likely to die of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, or "crib death"). Infants exposed to smoke have more of the following problems: coughing, problems with breathing, bronchitis/respiratory infections, allergies, stomach upset, difficulty keeping warm, ear infections, and eye and nasal irritation.



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New parents often are surprised to learn that smoking affects their baby's behavior as well. Babies of smoking parents tend to have colic more often, to cry more, to be more fussy, to be harder to soothe or quiet, and to have more problems sleeping than other babies. Just think – as a new mother, you are making your job easier by not smoking and by not allowing smoking around your baby!

Greg and Lindsey were very happy to bring home their new baby boy. After a few weeks, the baby began to have trouble with ear infections. Greg and Lindsey felt very stressed as they counted all of the doctors' visits, the hours spent in waiting rooms, nights of missed sleep, and the days lost from work. A few months later, Greg joined Lindsey in quitting smoking. To their surprise, their baby's ear infections and fussiness went away. Their own health got better too.

Being exposed to smoke can affect your baby throughout his or her childhood. Besides infant health problems, research shows that smoking has been linked to other health problems in children. These include asthma, chronic bronchitis, pneumonia, allergies, poorer lung function, abnormal blood pressure, increased risk of heart and lung disease, childhood leukemia and other cancers, chronic colds, sore throats, tooth decay (cavities), and ear infections. Also, children may have more problems with learning in school, lower grades, and more behavioral problems such as hyperactivity and poor attention. Last, children of smokers are more likely to become smokers themselves. It is hard to tell your children not to smoke if they have watched mom or dad smoke cigarettes. If your child grows up to become a smoker, then the chain of smoking and health problems may begin again with your grandkids.

REMEMBER: *When your child is in the room with a smoker, he or she is smoking, too!*

On the bright side – we can look at this information as more good news. By quitting smoking, you have taken the most important step in giving your child a healthy start in life. By creating a smoke-free home for your child, you are also showing your children how to live a happy life without cigarettes.

List three ways that you have improved your baby's health since you quit smoking:

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

Smoking and Others

Quitting smoking has not only improved your health, it has also improved the health of the people around you. People who live or work around smokers take in all the same chemicals in tobacco smoke. They breathe in nicotine, carbon monoxide, tars, and the other chemicals. In fact, nonsmokers who spend time around smokers may “smoke” one or two cigarettes per day, just by the amount of secondhand smoke they breathe in. This puts nonsmokers at risk of the same diseases mentioned earlier. For example, about 3,000 American nonsmokers die each year of lung cancer caused by breathing in second hand smoke.

A smoker does not have to be present to be exposed to secondhand smoke.

Smoke stays in rooms and other areas for a long time. It gets into many kinds of fabric, such as your clothes, curtains, furniture in your house, or on the seats in your car. The smoke affects anyone living in this space. Your children, your pets, and



other people in your home can then breathe in the smoke, too. Some ex-smokers have used this information to help them keep from smoking:

Whenever Gloria has an urge to smoke, she thinks of her beautiful four-year-old niece, Maria. She used to feel guilty for smoking cigarettes when Maria visited. In fact, Maria would cough and her eyes would water if she was in Gloria's home for more than an hour. Who knows what the smoke was doing to Maria's little lungs! And Gloria knew she did not want her niece to grow up and start smoking, too. Maria was so happy when Gloria told her that "Aunt Gloria does not smoke anymore." When Gloria thinks about her niece, she knows that she does not want to smoke again.

By quitting smoking, you have improved the lives and health of your family, your friends, your co-workers, and others. This is a great gift that you have given them.

List three ways that you have improved the health of others since you quit smoking:

- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____
- ✓ _____

How Can This Information Help You To Stay Quit?

Quitting smoking probably is the most important thing you can do to improve your health. For most people, quitting smoking is more important than losing weight, exercising more, or lowering cholesterol levels. All of these are healthy changes. But quitting smoking improves your health more than any of these other changes.

Sometimes ex-smokers forget the reasons why they quit smoking. Perhaps this booklet helped to remind you. So give yourself a big pat on the back for making such an important and hard change. Many women smokers often tend to forget that quitting smoking is a "big deal." Do not forget it. Quitting smoking helps you, but it also helps your children, your spouse or partner, and other people who spend time with you. You did well! Be proud about what you have done for yourself and your family.

Last, let's take another look at your plans after the baby is born. If these *Forever Free for Baby and Me* booklets have been working, then by now you should be moving up the scale toward 10. If so, good for you!

I am only stopping smoking while I am pregnant	I am not sure	I want to quit smoking forever
0-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8-----9-----10		

If you are not yet near 10, think about what is holding you back. You may want to re-read these first four booklets. The next booklet describes the change from pregnancy to motherhood. It also should help you move up the scale. Good luck!

Summary

1. By quitting smoking, you add years to your life and improve its quality.
2. By not smoking you no longer put harmful chemicals, such as poisons, into your body.
3. Quitting smoking and staying smoke-free, even after your baby is born, is an important step in giving your child a healthy start in life.
4. Staying smoke-free improves your health, your baby's health, and the health of others around you.



Notes:

- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____
- ◆ _____

Enjoy Better Health for You and Your Baby

Stay Smoke-Free!

Development of this booklet was supported by grants from the:

- American Cancer Society (#PBR-94)
- National Cancer Institute (#CA-80706; #CA-94256)

Produced by the Tobacco Research and Intervention Program at the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute at the University of South Florida. To order booklets, visit www.moffitt.org/foreverfree

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3/04-RL-6

