

Overview

About half of all Americans who keep smoking will die because of the habit. Each year about 480,000 people in the United States die from illnesses related to tobacco use. Smoking cigarettes kills more Americans than alcohol, car accidents, suicide, AIDS, homicide, and illegal drugs combined.¹ Tobacco use accounts for at least 30% of all cancer deaths.²

Key Facts

- Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States.¹
- In South Dakota the adult smoking rate is 22%; 49% of American Indians in South Dakota smoke.³
- Cigarette smokers die younger than non-smokers. Men and women who smoke are more likely to die between the ages of 35 and 69 than those who have never smoked. Stopping smoking by age 40 reduces loss of life by about 90%, but quitting at any age can reduce the risk of early death.⁴
- Secondhand smoke (SHS) causes lung cancer in people who have never smoked. The Surgeon General estimates that living with a smoker increases the chance of getting lung cancer by 20% to 30%.⁵
- Secondhand smoke also causes about 3,400 deaths from lung cancer.⁵
- Smokeless tobacco products are a major source of cancer-causing agents (carcinogens) and a known cause of human cancer. They increase the risk of developing cancer of the mouth and throat, esophagus (swallowing tube), and pancreas.
- In South Dakota the adult spit tobacco rate is 6%.³

Risk Factors

- Tobacco use accounts for at least 30% of all cancer deaths.⁶
- Smoking accounts for 87% of lung cancer deaths in men and 70% in women.²
 - It is linked to an increased risk of the following cancers: lung, larynx, oral, nose and sinuses, pharynx, esophagus, stomach, pancreas, cervix, kidney, and more.²
 - Exposure to SHS while pregnant increases the chance that a woman will have a spontaneous abortion (miscarriage), stillborn birth, low birthweight baby, and other pregnancy and delivery problems.²
- Spit tobacco causes many forms of cancers including: mouth, tongue, cheek, gum, throat, esophageal, stomach, pancreatic, and more.⁷

Prevention and Detection

The best prevention is to never smoke a cigarette or use any other form of tobacco. It is also important to avoid all forms secondhand smoke.⁸ Lung cancer symptoms can be due to the direct effect of growth of cancer cells in the lung, or due to the effect of cancer cells that have spread to other parts of the body. Symptoms may include: shortness of breath, coughing that does not go away, wheezing, coughing up blood, chest pain, and repeated respiratory infections such as bronchitis or pneumonia.⁹

Mouth lesions (Leukoplakia) can form in the mouth of spit tobacco users. These lesions can develop into forms of mouth cancers. The longer a person uses oral tobacco, the more likely they are to have leukoplakia.⁶

Resources

South Dakota Department of Health Tobacco Control Program: <http://doh.sd.gov/prevention/tobacco/>

American Cancer Society: www.cancer.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov

¹ Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/adult_data/cig_smoking/index.htm

² American Cancer Society, <http://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancercauses/tobaccocancer/cigarettesmoking/cigarette-smoking-illness-and-death>

³ SD BRFSS, 2012, <https://doh.sd.gov/statistics/2012BRFSS/Tobacco.pdf>

⁴ Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/health_effects/tobacco_related_mortality/index.htm

⁵ American Cancer Society, <http://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancercauses/tobaccocancer/secondhand-smoke>

⁶ American Cancer Society, <http://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancercauses/tobaccocancer/tobacco-related-cancer-fact-sheet>

⁷ American Cancer Society, <http://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancercauses/tobaccocancer/smokeless-tobacco>

⁸ American Cancer Society, <http://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancercauses/tobaccocancer/cigarettesmoking/cigarette-smoking-what-to-do>

⁹ American Cancer Society, <http://www.cancer.org/cancer/lungcancer-non-smallcell/moreinformation/lungcancerpreventionandearlydetection/index>