

# HEALTH MATTERS

## Surgeon General Warns: 1 cigarette is 1 too many

### Even second hand smoke can kill

(AP)-- Think the occasional cigarette won't hurt? Even a bit of social smoking — or inhaling someone else's secondhand smoke — could be enough to block your arteries and trigger a heart attack, says the newest surgeon general's report on the killer the nation just can't kick.

Lung cancer is what people usually fear from smoking, and yes, that can take years to strike. But Thursday's report says there's no doubt that tobacco smoke begins poisoning immediately — as more than 7,000 chemicals in each puff rapidly spread through the body to cause cellular damage in nearly every organ.

"That one puff on that cigarette could be the one that causes your heart attack," said Surgeon General Regina Benjamin.

Or the one that triggers someone else's: "I advise people to try to

avoid being around smoking any way that you can," she said.

About 443,000 Americans die from tobacco-caused illnesses every year. While the smoking rate has dropped dramatically since 1964, when the first surgeon general's report declared tobacco deadly, progress has stalled in the past decade. About 46 million adults — one in five — still smoke, and tens of millions more are regularly exposed to secondhand smoke. The government had hoped to drop the smoking rate to 12 percent by this year, a goal not only missed but that's now been put off to 2020.

Thursday's report is the 30th issued by the nation's surgeons general to warn the public about tobacco's risks.

"How many reports more does Congress need to have to say that cigarettes as a class of products



Regina Benjamin

ought to be banned?" asked well-known nicotine expert Dr. K. Michael Cummings of the Roswell Park Cancer Institute, who helped to review the report. "One-third of the patients who are in our hospital are here today because of cigarettes."

Still, this newest report is unusual because it devotes more than 700 pages to detail the biology of how cigarette smoke accomplishes its dirty deeds — including the latest genetic findings to help explain why some people become more addicted than others, and why some

smokers develop tobacco-caused disease faster than others.

There is no safe level of exposure to cigarette smoke, whether you deliberately inhale it or are a non-smoker who breathes in other people's fumes, the report concludes.

Kicking the habit lets your body start healing, Benjamin stressed: "It's never too late to quit but the sooner you quit the better. Even if you're 70, 80 years old and you're a smoker, there's still benefit from quitting."

## HEALTHWATCH

**Chronic Pain Support Group** -- Meets the first Wednesday at 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. and the third Wednesday of each month, from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. For more information, call 503-256-4000.

**Cholesterol Profiles** -- Get the resources to help you keep an eye on your cholesterol and other indicators of heart health. Educational material provided. For more information, call 503-261-6611.

**Bereavement Support Groups** -- Free, safe confidential group meetings for those who have experienced the death of a loved one offered on various nights and locations. For information and registration, call 503-215-4622.

**Maternity Water Workout** -- Helping new moms regain muscle tone, strength, and flexibility, all in the support and freedom of the water. Call 503-256-4000 for more information.

**Senior Aerobics** -- A low-impact workout geared specifically toward seniors. Call 503-449-0783 for current schedule.

**Osteoporosis Screening** -- An ultrasound bone density screening with personalized education; fee \$30. To schedule an appointment, call 503-261-6611.

**Mind Body Health Class** -- Learn and practice techniques to help you improve your mood, health and wellbeing, including effective ways to manage difficult emotions and chronic stress or illness. Registration is \$70 for Kaiser Permanente members and \$95 for nonmembers. Call 503-286-6816.

**Red Cross Certification** -- The Oregon Trail Chapter Red Cross now offers credits to help professionals maintain licensing or certification. For a cumulative list, visit [pdxinfo.net](http://pdxinfo.net).

**Tenderfoot Care** -- Treat your feet with a soak, nail trim, buffing and massage from a licensed nurse at one of six clinics or at your home. Call 503-251-6303 for more information.

**Free Body Basics** -- This physician recommended class is appropriate for all ages and health conditions. Plan to attend this one-session class and learn the simple guidelines for safe exercises, including stretching. Call 503-256-4000 to register.

**Families with Mental Illness** -- A free, 12-week course for people whose family members live with mental illness is offered at Emanuel Hospital, Mt. Hood Medical Center and Providence Medical Center. The course has been described as "life-changing" by former participants. Registration is required by calling 503-203-3326.

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