Facts about Smoking

Smoking kills

Every year in Australia, approximately 15,000 deaths occur as a result of smoking. Some of the diseases caused by smoking include lung cancer, bronchitis, heart disease and stroke. Smoking kills more people in Australia than all the people killed by alcohol, other drugs, murder, suicide, road crashes, rail crashes, air crashes, poisoning, drowning, fires, falls, lightning, electrocution, snakes, spiders and sharks.

Smoke-free is the norm

- West Australians are mostly non-smokers, with approximately 85% of adults and 94% of school-aged children in Western Australia choosing to be smoke-free.
- People who start smoking at a young age are more likely to become regular smokers, smoke more heavily, have difficulties quitting and are at greater risk of getting smoking-related diseases.
- The majority of adult smokers say they wish they had never started and that they would like to stop.

Addiction to cigarette smoking

- Nicotine is the addictive drug in tobacco.
- New smokers often feel dizzy and sick from tobacco smoke, but some get used to its effects. As they continue to smoke, their bodies learn to depend on nicotine and they can tolerate smoking more and more.
- When smokers stop they may get cravings and feel anxious, hungry, and irritable, and find it hard to focus on what they are doing.
- Social and emotional factors also contribute to someone becoming addicted to smoking. For example, people may feel they need to smoke when they are at a party, when they are with certain friends or feeling stressed or bored.
- People do not need to smoke many cigarettes to become addicted to smoking. Young people can be at risk of becoming addicted to smoking even if they only smoke occasionally, such as at parties or on holidays.

Support for quitting

Someone who is addicted to smoking may find it difficult to stop or cut down. They may crave cigarettes and experience withdrawal symptoms as their body adjusts to not having nicotine. Getting help with quitting will give smokers a much better chance of success. They can:
- Visit their doctor for advice on quitting methods or products
- Get support from family or friends
- Call the Quitline 13 QUIT (13 78 48)

References