

If you smoke, plan to quit now

One of the most important things you can do to help control your asthma is to quit smoking.

If you have children, or are thinking about starting a family, quitting is a wonderful gift to your children.

If you want to quit, or are thinking about it, call the

Quitline 131 848

www.quitsa.org.au

For more information about asthma and
asthma management, call

1800 645 130

Asthma SA helpline



Smoking and Asthma



Government
of South Australia



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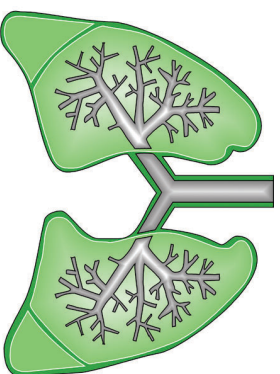
The relationship between tobacco smoke and asthma is complex. But we do know that tobacco smoke triggers asthma attacks in some people, makes others' asthma worse and affects how asthma medications work. We also know that babies and small children are affected by their parents' smoking.

Smoking and asthma don't mix but...

- There are more smokers with asthma, than without it
- 42% of boys and 39% of girls with asthma live with one or more regular smokers.

Asthma - the facts

- 3,000,000 Australians have asthma
- Asthma is a very common illness affecting up to 1 in 4 schoolchildren
- 1 in 7 adolescents and 1 in 10 adults
- It is a major cause of lost time in schools and workplaces
- It is the most common reason for young children to be in hospital
- The death rate from asthma in Australia is slowly falling. However, in 2001, 422 Australians died from asthma.



What is asthma?

People with asthma have episodes of wheezing, chest tightness and shortness of breath. This is because of narrowing of the airways, caused by inflammation and swelling of the airways' lining, the tightening of the muscles around the airways and the production of excess mucus. All three cause the airways to become blocked, making breathing more difficult. It is usually more difficult to breathe out than in.

If you have asthma, your air passages are more sensitive and overreact when they

come into contact with certain "triggers", causing an asthma attack. Cigarette smoke is one of the major triggers for asthma. Sometimes triggers can't be easily identified. Some people may wheeze when having an asthma attack while others may cough a lot.

It is not known what exactly causes asthma to develop, but it is recognised that children born to women who smoke during pregnancy, or children who live in a house with a smoker(s), have a higher incidence of asthma.

The severity of a person's asthma varies. Sometimes asthma attacks can occur without warning. This can be a frightening experience. There is currently no cure for asthma, but people with well-managed asthma can lead full and productive lives.

Smoking and asthma

Smoking irritates the lungs and leads to overproduction of mucus. It also interferes with the body's filtering and cleaning of the lungs. The tiny hair-like structures that clean dust and dirt from the airways are paralysed by tobacco smoke, so that mucus and toxic substances accumulate.

Smokers of any age are more likely to suffer from chronic bronchitis, and over time lung function is reduced.

Smoking

- makes asthma worse
- may increase the frequency of asthma attacks
- makes asthma control more difficult
- increases the chances of permanently damaging the airways
- makes asthma medication less effective.

Managing your asthma

Smoking or being routinely exposed to passive smoking can make asthma difficult to manage well.

If you experience asthma symptoms overnight, on waking, during activity or have to use your reliever medication more than three times per week, it may be that your asthma is not well managed.

This can have a negative impact on your life and prevent you from doing the things you really enjoy. If you experience asthma symptoms at night, when shopping, walking your dog, playing sport (or any activity), contact your local doctor or Asthma Foundation for further information.

Avoid smoky environments

