
GET READY FOR
PLAIN PACKAGING
No logos, colours, brand images or promotional information
Pack surfaces in a standard colour
Brand and product names in a standard colour and font
SMOKING HARMS UNBORN BABIES
Graphic health warnings used in conjunction with plain packaging
Brand
Variant
25
Reduce attractiveness of tobacco packaging
Eliminate tobacco advertising and promotion
Limit deceptive tobacco packaging
Increase effectiveness of tobacco health warnings
World Health Organization
31MAY:WORLDNOTOBACCODAY
www.who.int/world-no-tobacco-day
#NoTobacco

Tobacco

Introduction

The tobacco epidemic is one of the biggest public health threats the world has ever faced, killing around 6 million people a year. More than 5 million of those deaths are the result of direct tobacco use while more than 600 000 are the result of non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke.

Nearly 80% of the more than 1 billion smokers worldwide live in low- and middle-income countries, where the burden of tobacco-related illness and death is heaviest.

Tobacco users who die prematurely deprive their families of income, raise the cost of health care, and hinder economic development.

In some countries, children from poor households are frequently employed in tobacco farming to provide family income. These children are especially vulnerable to "green tobacco sickness," which is caused by the nicotine that is absorbed through the skin from the handling of wet tobacco leaves.

Surveillance is key

Good monitoring tracks the extent and character of the tobacco epidemic and indicates how best to tailor policies. Only 1 in 3 countries, representing one-third of the world's population, monitors tobacco use by repeating nationally representative youth and adult surveys at least once every 5 years.

Second-hand smoke kills

Second-hand smoke is the smoke that fills restaurants, offices, or other enclosed spaces when people burn tobacco products such as cigarettes, *bidis* and water-pipes. There are more than 4,000 chemicals in tobacco smoke, of which at least 250 are known to be harmful and more than 50 are known to cause cancer.

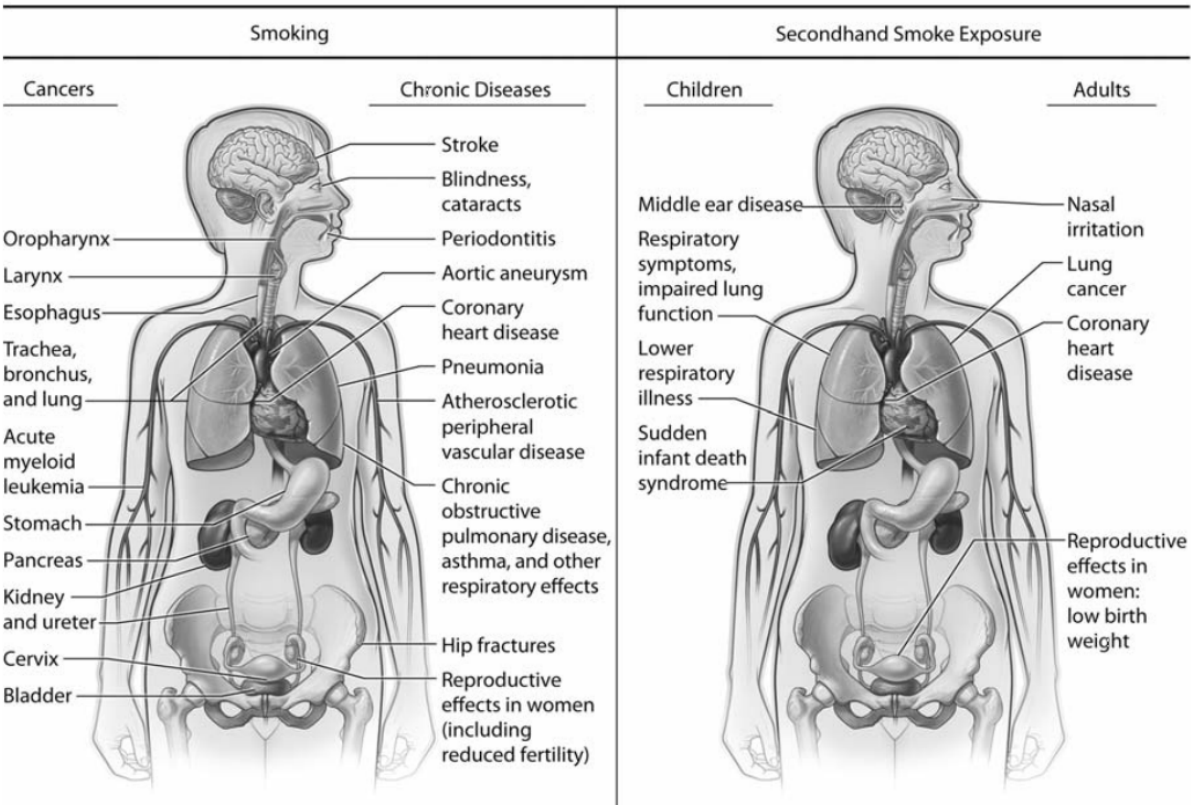
There is no safe level of exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke.

- In adults, second-hand smoke causes serious cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, including coronary heart disease and lung cancer. In infants, it causes sudden death. In pregnant women, it causes low birth weight.
- Almost half of children regularly breathe air polluted by tobacco smoke in public places.
- Second-hand smoke causes more than 600,000 premature deaths per year.
- In 2004, children accounted for 28% of the deaths attributable to second-hand smoke.

Every person should be able to breathe tobacco-smoke-free air. Smoke-free laws protect the health of non-smokers, are popular, do not harm business and encourage smokers to quit.

Over 1.3 billion people, or 18% of the world's population, are protected by comprehensive national smoke-free laws.

Diseases caused by smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke



◆ **Tobacco users need help to quit**

Studies show that few people understand the specific health risks of tobacco use. For example, a 2009 survey in China revealed that only 38% of smokers knew that smoking causes coronary heart disease and only 27% knew that it causes stroke.

Among smokers who are aware of the dangers of tobacco, most want to quit. Counseling and medication can more than double the chance that a smoker who tries to quit will succeed.

National comprehensive cessation services with full or partial cost-coverage are available to assist tobacco users to quit in only 24 countries, representing 15% of the world's population.

There is no cessation assistance of any kind in one quarter of low-income countries.

◆ **Picture warnings work**

Hard-hitting anti-tobacco advertisements and graphic pack warnings – especially those that include pictures – reduce the number of children who begin smoking and increase the number of smokers who quit.

Graphic warnings can persuade smokers to protect the health of non-smokers by smoking less inside the home and avoiding smoking near children. Studies carried out after the implementation of

pictorial package warnings in Brazil, Canada, Singapore, and Thailand consistently show that pictorial warnings significantly increase people's awareness of the harms of tobacco use.

Only 42 countries, representing 19% of the world's population, meet the best practice for pictorial warnings, which includes the warnings in the local language and cover an average of at least half of the front and back of cigarette packs. Most of these countries are low- or middle-income countries.

Mass media campaigns can also reduce tobacco consumption by influencing people to protect non-smokers and convincing youths to stop using tobacco.

Over half of the world's population live in the 39 countries that have aired at least 1 strong anti-tobacco mass media campaign within the last 2 years.



◆ Ad bans lower consumption

Bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship can reduce tobacco consumption.

- A comprehensive ban on all tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship could decrease tobacco consumption by an average of about 7%, with some countries experiencing a decline in consumption of up to 16%.
- Only 29 countries, representing 12% of the world's population, have completely banned all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship.
- Around 1 country in 3 has minimal or no restrictions at all on tobacco advertising, promotion, and sponsorship.

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- **Taxes discourage tobacco use**

Tobacco taxes are the most cost-effective way to reduce tobacco use, especially among young and poor people. A tax increase that raises tobacco prices by 10% decreases tobacco consumption by about 4% in high-income countries and about 5% in low- and middle-income countries.

Even so, high tobacco taxes is a measure that is rarely implemented. Only 33 countries, with 10% of the world's population, have introduced taxes on tobacco products so that more than 75% of the retail price is tax. Tobacco tax revenues are on average 269 times higher than spending on tobacco control, based on available data.

Source: *http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs339/en/*