

# Heart Disease and Smoking

## Tobacco

### How does smoking affect blood pressure?

Cigarette smoking causes a temporary increase in blood pressure. Smoking is a major risk factor for heart disease. Smoking and high blood pressure together **triple** your risk for heart attack.

### How does smoking affect the heart and blood vessels?

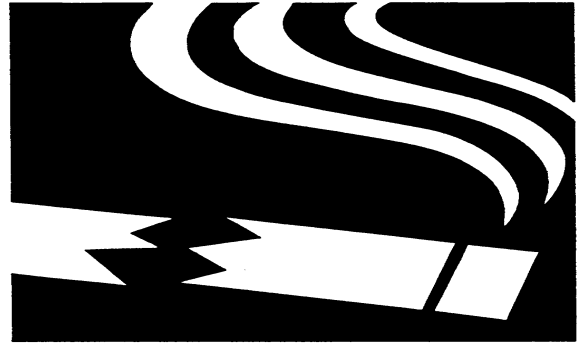
- Cigarette smoking speeds up the pulse rate and **makes the heart work harder.**
- Smoking makes arteries contract and **reduces blood flow to the heart.**
- Nicotine, carbon monoxide and other harmful substances in cigarettes **damage the arteries.** Cholesterol clings to the damaged area, reducing blood flow to the heart.
- Smoking **affects the health of the smoker and others around them,** including children.

### Will quitting smoking really help me if I've smoked for years?

**YES!** No matter how long you've smoked, your body begins to repair itself as soon as you quit. In fact, within 24 hours after the last cigarette, blood pressure and pulse rate drop to normal and heart attack risk starts to drop.

### Are nicotine patches and gum safe?

**Yes.** The small amount of nicotine in patches and gum is not harmful. Ask your doctor to suggest the best quitting aid for you.



### I've tried quitting before. How can I be sure I'll succeed if I try again?

Quitting smoking is tough. Many ex-smokers try three or more times to quit before they succeed. A crucial step toward quitting is a strong belief that you will be successful.

### Contact Quitline Iowa:

Quitline Iowa is a toll-free, statewide smoking cessation counseling hotline funded by the IDPH Division of Tobacco Use Prevention and Control. Quitline Iowa is staffed from 8 a.m. to midnight, seven days a week. You may reach Quitline Iowa by calling 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669). Trained health counselors provide information and assistance to help you stop smoking.

### Additional Information:

For additional information on heart disease or other Understanding Series fact sheets, contact the Iowa Department of Public Health Division of Tobacco Use Prevention and Control, at 515-281-6225.

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