



Smoking and Heart Disease

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You just got back from work and slump on the couch. There is a cigarette pack on the coffee table and you reach for it. You believe that smoking a cigarette will help you forget the troubles at work. Have you ever stopped to think about the side effects of smoking? Of course, it is highly associated with lung cancer and breathing difficulties. In addition to that, smoking is also a major factor of heart disease.

You may think a puff of smoke is nothing. Do you know that tobacco smoke contains more than 4,000 chemicals? Apart from that, the chemicals inside the tobacco are also poisons. Blood pressure increases due to the nicotine in a cigarette. Coupled with carbon monoxide, the heart has to work harder since it replaces oxygen that is much needed for your body. The most deadly component in a cigarette might be tar as it is an active agent for cancer. Imagine taking puff after puff of smoke; imagine how congested the blood flow will be.

Approximately 30 percent of United States citizens died due to smoking habits. This is because smoking contributes to cardiovascular problems such as atherosclerosis. Atherosclerosis happens when the lining covering arteries degrades. The walls in the blood vessels thicken and this makes blood flow and oxygen more difficult. When this happens, breathing becomes a task to the body, even without the knowledge of the person. Deposits and fats could develop on lining of arteries, which prevents arteries from performing its job to supply oxygen throughout the body. This is when people start complaining that they feel painful on their chest (angina pectoris), especially when they are doing heavy activities. The more cigarettes you smoke per day, the higher your risk of experiencing heart diseases since the effect is cumulative. Smoking clearly prevents you heart from pumping oxygen throughout your body, increases blood pressure and heart rate. Deposits on the lining of arteries thicken. In addition to that, you are actu-

ally exposing your body to more sickness as your immune system weakens due to smoking.

Although one can still be affected by cigarette if they are a non-smoker, smokers are at 70 percent more risk of heart diseases. The effect will keep adding up as a smoker continues their smoking habit. Someone who smokes for year has greater risk compared to someone who has just recently started smoking. However, this does not mean that people who have just started smoking is not in danger. The risk is still there for you to look for.

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