

Smoking Cessation

Smoking is one of the key risk factors for coronary artery disease that you can control.

Smoking is the largest preventable cause of ischaemic heart disease (IHD) and coronary artery disease. Each year more than sixteen thousand cardiovascular deaths, many of which are premature, occur in Canada as a result of smoking. People who stop smoking for one year reduce the risk of heart attack down to the level of those who never smoked. If a heart attack does occur, a smoker has a greater risk of dying than a non-smoker. Smokers with coronary artery disease must make every effort to stop smoking. There are community resources available to help you quit. Ask your doctor or nurse about them.

Adverse health effects of smoking:

- Smoking raises your blood pressure contributing to hypertension
- Smoking changes the balance of cholesterol in your body to increase the risk of hardening of the arteries. The good cholesterol (HDL) levels fall in association with smoking.
- Smoking results in carbon monoxide build up in the blood and reduced oxygen delivery to the tissues.
- Smoking increases the thickness of the blood and the tendency of the blood to clot thus increasing the risk of heart attack.
- Smoking significantly increases your risk of sudden death.
- Smoking may be associated with 50 to 55% of all strokes occurring in the United States. The stroke risk of a smoker is 1.5 to 3 times that of a non-smoker. This risk is particularly high in women smokers using oral contraceptives.
- Smoking is associated with peripheral vascular disease and impaired circulation to the extremities. As well smoking may contribute to the development of abdominal aortic aneurysms.

Non-Cardiac Adverse Effects of Smoking:

- Smoking contributes to the development of chronic lung disease, emphysema and chronic bronchitis.
- The association of smoking and lung cancer is well documented. Now that you are aware of the adverse effects of smoking, you can realize the importance of doing everything in your power to quit. I realize this is a difficult process. There are a variety of approaches to be taken.