



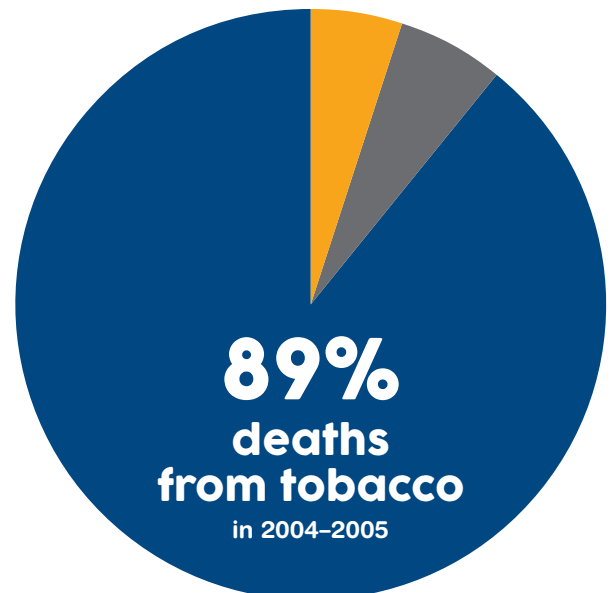
## Smoking in drug & alcohol treatment settings

### Are you seeking treatment for a drug or alcohol addiction? Do you smoke tobacco? Have you ever considered quitting smoking?

It may seem like a challenge to quit smoking at the same time as quitting other drugs, but research shows that it is definitely possible and will benefit your health and finances. Quitting smoking at the same time as giving up other drugs or alcohol may well help you to stay off those other drugs or alcohol. You are already making important life changes by quitting other drugs, so why not take the opportunity to quit smoking as well?

Smoking cessation has not traditionally been a major part of drug and alcohol treatment programs as attention is usually focused on alcohol or illicit drug use.<sup>1</sup> Yet diseases caused by smoking kill more people than illegal drugs and alcohol combined.<sup>2</sup> Also, many smokers suffer these debilitating illnesses for years, whether or not they die from these illnesses or other causes.

### Death from tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs in Australia in 2004–2005



- 5% Illicit Drugs
- 6% Alcohol
- 89% Tobacco

Source: Collins and Lapsley, 2006<sup>3</sup>

## Why not ask for help quitting smoking too?

- ▶ Stopping smoking is unlikely to threaten abstinence from alcohol or other drug use.<sup>4</sup>
- ▶ There is evidence that quitting smoking, on average, improves the success of treatment for alcohol and other drug use by 25%.<sup>5</sup>
- ▶ Continuing smoking adversely affects treatment for other drugs, such as cannabis.<sup>1</sup>



**Research has shown that the odds of mouth and throat cancer are approximately 35 times higher amongst people who drink and smoke...**

## Benefits of quitting

While quitting smoking can be difficult, it is one of the best things a person can do to improve their health and wellbeing.

### Quitting smoking can help you:

- ▶ **Save money!** You will save money by giving up smoking. You can save nearly \$10,000 a year by quitting if you are a pack-a-day smoker.
- ▶ **Feel good.** You will feel as if you are in control now and feel healthier almost straight away.
- ▶ **Have more energy to do things you like doing.** Such as walking, running or playing sports.
- ▶ **Look and smell better.** Your clothes and your breath won't smell any more. Quitting smoking improves the appearance of skin and hair, and reduces wrinkles – and teeth will become whiter.

## Tobacco as a problem drug

Tobacco smoking is one of the leading preventable causes of death and disease in Australia.<sup>6</sup> In 2013 tobacco smoking caused nearly 5500 deaths in NSW, and in 2013–2014 just over 46,000 hospitalisations, due mainly to lung cancer, other lung diseases and heart disease.<sup>7</sup> In 2004–05, smoking caused 14 times as many deaths as alcohol, and 17 times the number of deaths due to illicit drug use in Australia.<sup>6</sup>

Tobacco smoking harms almost every organ in the body, causes many diseases, and reduces the health of smokers in general. Tobacco smoking causes many deaths at the time of people's lives when they are at the height of their productivity, depriving families of breadwinners.<sup>8</sup> Smoking causes cancers of the mouth, throat, lungs, stomach, kidneys, liver and cervix. It also causes cardiovascular diseases, respiratory diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and pneumonia. Smoking affects developing babies in the womb, resulting in foetal death, stillbirths and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).<sup>9</sup> Second-hand smoke contains many chemicals, and exposure to it is also harmful to the health of people around you – especially babies, young children, adolescents and the elderly.<sup>10</sup>

Being a smoker and a drinker increases your risks for a range of cancers. Research has shown odds of mouth cancer approximately 200–300 times higher amongst people who drink and smoke heavily compared to non-smoking, non-drinkers. Approximately 80% of mouth and throat cancer cases in men and about 65% of cases in women can be attributed to alcohol and tobacco use.<sup>11</sup>

## Beliefs about smoking

There are beliefs about smoking that make it a lower priority for people trying to quit other drugs. Many of these beliefs are not based on the facts.

### Belief: “Tobacco is not a ‘real’ drug”.

Tobacco may not cause as severe problems with family and work as other drugs; however, it is a real drug. Nicotine is an addictive drug that affects the reward pathway in the brain, as do other addictive drugs. People are more likely to die from smoking tobacco than from alcohol or illicit drugs.

### Belief: “Quitting smoking at the same time as quitting other drugs will worsen my treatment outcome and is too hard”.

You may have considered quitting alcohol or other drugs ‘too hard’ before, but look at what you have achieved already! Studies suggest that quitting smoking at the same time as quitting other drugs does not make it harder to recover from other drugs<sup>4</sup>, and in fact there is evidence that it improves the success of other drug treatments.<sup>5</sup>

In 2013 tobacco smoking caused more than 5400 deaths in NSW.<sup>7</sup>



### Belief: “Tobacco does not cause immediate problems, unlike substance abuse disorders”.

Every cigarette is doing damage to your health. Smoking also has a large impact on your wallet! Smoking households are three times more likely to experience severe financial stress<sup>12</sup>, and lifetime smoking is linked to and contributes to poverty.<sup>12,13</sup> The amount of money spent on cigarettes could be saved to pay your bills, to buy a new TV or car, or to go on a holiday. The longer someone smokes, the more likely they are to suffer and die from smoking related causes.



## Need help to quit?

Quitting **is** possible. For most people it can take a few attempts, but if you keep trying, you will improve your chances of quitting for good.

There are things you can do to quit smoking **now**:

- ▶ You can set a **quit date** to quit.
- ▶ You can **cut down to quit**. But remember, it's cutting down to quit, not cutting down to *not* quit!
- ▶ **Ask your GP** about subsidised medications, including nicotine replacement therapy (patches only) available to help you stop smoking.
- ▶ If you are part of a treatment centre already or are receiving drug or alcohol counselling, **speak to your counsellor/psychologist** about ways to quit smoking.

- ▶ Call the **Quitline 13 7848 (13 QUIT)** a 24-hour, 7-days-a-week telephone service that offers free assistance to smokers and former smokers wishing to speak to a trained health professional about quitting or staying quit.
- ▶ Visit the **iCanQuit** website: [www.icanquit.com.au](http://www.icanquit.com.au) – an interactive quit tool that lets smokers share their stories about previous, current or planned quit attempts with others. It provides helpful hints on how to quit, as well as a goal tracker and savings calculator so that smokers can see how much money is saved by quitting.

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