GET THE FACTS: SMOKING

Tobacco (a main ingredient in cigarettes) has a history of use spanning over 2000 years. The tobacco industry had developed in the 1700s in response to widespread use. While health concerns related to the use of tobacco were noted as early as 1602, a series of major medical reports in the 1950s and 1960s outlined a range of serious diseases caused by tobacco. There is now generally a tougher stance towards cigarette smoking in public, and laws are tightening on the ability for the tobacco industry to advertise its products. Most health practitioners will agree that smoking is harmful to health, and creates more risks than benefits.

Like any drug, improper use of tobacco or nicotine can have negative effects on physical and mental health; and like any regulated drug, the inappropriate possession, use or sale of tobacco or nicotine products has legal consequences. Get the facts below.

The consequences: The law

- All states and territories in Australia have banned smoking in vehicles with children, and in enclosed public places such as workplaces and restaurants. It is illegal to sell tobacco products to persons under 18 years of age.
- Smoking in non-enclosed spaces (such as footpaths) vary from state to state, including a minimum distance required between, for example, a person smoking and a bus stop.
- Since 2012, tobacco companies have had to sell their cigarettes in logo-free, drab dark brown packaging. Restrictions are also in place for tobacco advertising.
- While it is currently legal to purchase e-cigarettes and personal vapourisers, e-liquids available for purchase do not contain nicotine. In some states and territories, purchasing or obtaining nicotine without a permit is an offence.
- Some states and territories have legislation prohibiting the marketing of products that resemble tobacco products.

The consequences: Your health

Chronic diseases and health problems known to be related to cigarette smoking:
- Stroke
- Blindness and cataracts
- Coronary heart disease
- Pneumonia
- Diabetes
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Reproductive effects in women – reduced fertility
- Male sexual dysfunction
- Rheumatoid arthritis

Known linked cancers:
- Oropharynx
- Larynx
- Esophagus
- Trachea, bronchus, and lung
- Acute myeloid leukemia
- Stomach
- Liver
- Pancreas
- Kidney
- Cervical
- Bladder
- Colorectal²

Despite not containing tobacco, it is too early to state whether there will be negative health effects from the use of electronic cigarettes or personal vaporizers. Concerns exist about unreliable chemical concentration and ingredients used in e-cigarette liquid, as well as the potential for nicotine leakage as a poisons hazard.³

References: