

# Health Effects of Tobacco Use on Young Adults

Tobacco users often point to a lack of immediate health risks as a reason for delaying a cessation attempt. "I have to die sometime" or "I'll quit before I get old" are common excuses heard by health professionals working with young adult smokers. However, tobacco use has a variety of cosmetic, short-term, and long-term health effects on young adults. This fact sheet will take a look at common risks young people face when using tobacco.

## Cosmetic Risks Include:

Hair odor and discoloration  
Premature aging  
Discolored teeth  
Bad breath  
Finger stains from tar  
Impaired sense of taste and smell

## Short-term Risks Include:

Painful menstrual cycles  
Shortness of breath  
Increased likelihood of cold, flu, pneumonia and/or asthma  
Sore throat

## Long-term Risks Include:

Psoriasis  
Poor circulation  
Stomach ulcers  
Infertility (men and women)  
Burns from lit cigarettes  
Weakened immune system  
Slow healing of wounds and surgical recovery  
Gum disease

Deformed or reduced number of sperm  
Impotence  
Chronic cough and/or bronchitis  
Increased likelihood of ear infections  
Addiction

## Health Risks Specific to

### Pregnant Women Include:

Miscarriage  
Ectopic pregnancy  
Placental abruption  
Premature birth  
Increase in blood pressure  
Low birth weight  
SIDS

By quitting, many of the health effects experienced by young adults can be reversed or avoided completely. For assistance in quitting, call 1-800-No-Butts or visit your community or campus health center.

**Young Adult Fact Sheet #22**  
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