



BREAST CANCER AWARENESS

Smoking Linked to Shortened Breast Cancer Survival

Breast cancer survivors who are smokers and continue to smoke after their diagnosis are more likely to die from breast cancer than breast cancer survivors who have never been smokers, according to findings from the Collaborative Breast Cancer Study. The smokers were also more likely to die from respiratory cancer, respiratory disease, or cardiovascular disease.



The Collaborative Breast Cancer Study was conducted by the University of Wisconsin, Dartmouth College, and Harvard University. It involved more than 20,000 women who were diagnosed with breast cancer between 1988 and 2008. It is the largest study of length of survival according to smoking habits in women with a history of breast cancer, and the first study to look at smoking habits both before and after diagnosis with breast cancer.

The study compared the causes of death among 4 groups: women who never smoked, women who smoked but quit at least 1 year before diagnosis, women who smoked and quit after diagnosis, and women who smoked and continued to smoke after diagnosis. The highest risks of death as a result of breast cancer were observed among long-term smokers, women who smoked heavily, or former smokers who quit fewer than 5 years before their breast cancer diagnosis.

About 10% of the women were smokers who kept smoking after diagnosis, which is consistent with a study by American Cancer Society researchers that found about 1 in 10 cancer survivors still reports smoking about 9 years after a diagnosis. These women were more likely than non-smokers and former smokers to die of breast cancer.

The researchers also found that women who quit smoking after their diagnosis were significantly less likely to die from respiratory cancer, respiratory disease, or cardiovascular disease than women who continued to smoke. The women who quit were also less likely to die overall or from breast cancer specifically, although neither of these results were statistically significant. Still, the authors say their study reinforces the importance for women with breast cancer to quit smoking.

“Our study shows the consequences facing both active and former smokers with a history of breast cancer,” said co-author Michael Passarelli, PhD. “About one in ten breast cancer survivors smoke after their diagnosis. For them, these results should provide additional motivation to quit.”

Study: Smoking Linked to Shortened Breast Cancer Survival. Retrieved from <https://www.cancer.org/latest-news/study-smoking-linked-to-shortened-breast-cancer-survival.html>

Cigarette Smoking: Still an Epidemic

- Approximately 16% of all US adults are classified as smokers. As such, tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of death and disease in the USA.
- According to the Center for Disease Control, smoking leads to nearly half a million premature deaths and the loss of over 5 million years of potential life in both children and adults.
- Globally, smoking leads to 6 million deaths a year, with over 600,000 of those deaths attributed to secondhand smoke.
- Smoking-related illness costs more than \$300 billion a year in the USA alone. This includes nearly \$170 billion in direct medical care for adults and \$156 billion in lost productivity. Despite the toll of cigarette smoking on both public health and the economy, the tobacco industry is booming; 15 billion cigarettes are sold in the world daily.
- More than 16 million Americans live with a smoking-related disease. The toxins in cigarette smoke have access to almost every organ of the body; thus, smokers are more likely than nonsmokers to develop a wide range of diseases, including heart disease, stroke, pulmonary disease, and cancer.

Recent insights into cigarette smoking as a lifestyle risk factor for breast cancer. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5348072/>



A Personal Message From Your Health Promotion Health Myth Busting Team



Dear Health Myth Busters,

Does smoking cause breast cancer?

Sincerely,
Just Curious

Dear Just Curious,

The CDC lists known risk factors for breast cancer as age, family history, obesity, alcohol use, genetic mutations such as BRCA 1/2, oral contraceptive use, and combination hormone therapy use. Despite research over several decades, the link to smoking is suggestive but not clear. Heavy smoking over a long period of time can increase the risk of breast cancer. One thing that has been proven is that smoking not only causes cancer but can also negatively impact cancer treatment and survival. The best advice is to remain tobacco free. If you are a current tobacco user who wants to quit, see your health care provider for additional help and tobacco cessation medications, as needed.

Sincerely,
Health Myth Busters

Got questions on other health issues related to sleep health, physical activity, tobacco, or nutrition? Share them with us and we will help you “Bust The Myths!” Send your questions to usaf.jbsa.afmsa.mbx.hpo@mail.mil. Make sure to include in the subject line “Health Myth Buster.” For more online health tips visit the Air Force Health Promotion webpage <https://www.airforcemedicine.af.mil/Resources/Health-Promotion/>

Community Events

HERE'S WHAT'S GOING ON WHERE YOU LIVE

Your Local Health Promotion Office



Contact:

Phone:

Email:

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
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