

10 facts about

tobacco

- Tobacco use causes a number of fatal diseases: chronic obstructive lung disease (emphysema and chronic bronchitis), lung cancer, aortic aneurysm, ischaemic heart disease, bladder cancer, upper respiratory site cancers and pancreatic cancer.
- Tobacco use kills approximately one half of all lifetime users. About **70 million** people died due to tobacco between 1950 and 2000.
- There are currently **1.1 billion** smokers in the world, **70%** of whom are in low income countries. Over the next fifty years, 450 million are expected to die due to tobacco use.
- Currently in the world, approximately **90,000** children and adolescents begin smoking every day.
- Cancer risks are **4.5 times** more related to the duration of tobacco use than to the daily quantity of use. In other words, the longer the use, the greater the risk. Smoking 10 cigarettes a day for 20 years is 4.5 times more dangerous than smoking 20 cigarettes a day for 10 years.
- Exposure to others' tobacco smoke is recognised as a cause of cancer and heart disease among adults. Exposure to maternal smoking increases the risk of sudden infant death syndrome and foetal growth retardation.
- Tobacco companies are driven by profit-making and they invest those profits in making the choice to use tobacco seem reasonable and recruiting new users. Tobacco companies are not to be trusted. They have consistently misled the public and governments about their knowledge of the health and addictive effects of tobacco. In 2000, in the US, tobacco companies spent **\$9.7 billion**— \$26.6 million per day— on advertising and promotions.
- Tobacco use is addictive. Its addictive impact is reinforced by each puff of a cigarette, each draw on a pipe, each suck or chew or sniff. (A smoker of 20 cigarettes per day, taking an average of 10 puffs per cigarette, gets **200 "hits"** per day).
- Smokers or other tobacco users can stop successfully. They can do it alone but results are better when they are assisted either by counselling and/or by medications (nicotine replacement or Zyban). Most people are unable to succeed on their first attempt(s) at cessation.
- Countries that have a strong national tobacco control programme that includes legislative controls on the tobacco industry, protection of tobacco consumers and of those exposed to tobacco smoke, access to effective prevention and cessation aids and programmes have shown slow but consistent decreases in tobacco use in their population. These measures permit the growth of social values that discourage tobacco use.

