

## Smoking and diabetes: a deadly combination

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There's no point in mincing words... smoking is deadly. There is no safe level of smoking and there are absolutely no health benefits.

People with diabetes who smoke face great risks. Diabetes itself is a serious disease that carries an already very high risk of heart disease and stroke. Adding smoking to diabetes drastically raises this risk and the risk of other diabetes complications, further shortening life expectancy and decreasing quality of life.

Many people with diabetes work very hard to control their blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol in order to prevent complications of diabetes such as heart attack and stroke. Unfortunately, smoking simply undoes all this hard work.

Smoking increases the already high health risks associated with diabetes:

- **Heart attack or stroke:** smoking reduces the amount of oxygen available for tissues. This can lead to heart attacks and strokes. People with diabetes who smoke are three times more likely to die of heart attack or stroke than people with diabetes who do not smoke.
- **Blood glucose:** smoking raises blood glucose.
- **Blood pressure:** smoking raises blood pressure.
- **Cholesterol:** smoking increases some types of cholesterol in blood, increasing the risk of heart attack and stroke.
- **Infections:** smoking damages blood vessels, making it harder for the body to heal. This increases the risk of infections and amputations.
- **Kidney and nerve disease:** smoking further increases the risk of these two serious complications of diabetes.
- **Erectile dysfunction:** smoking can cause problems associated with getting and maintaining an erection.

### Quitting is never easy

Unfortunately, as anyone who has tried to quit knows, smoking is an extremely addictive habit. The process of quitting is physically and emotionally difficult. However, it is probably the single most effective thing you can do to improve your health. In fact, your health starts to improve as soon as you quit. If you are serious about kicking the habit, speak to your doctor about how he or she can help.