

TOBACCO AND THE BODY

Tobacco affects nearly every part of the body, damaging some of our most important organs.

Exercising

If you smoke or you're around other people who are smoking (known as second hand smoke) your lung capacity decreases so you may find it more difficult to breathe during exercise.

When carbon monoxide from tobacco enters the bloodstream less oxygen reaches the muscles which is vital for exercising.

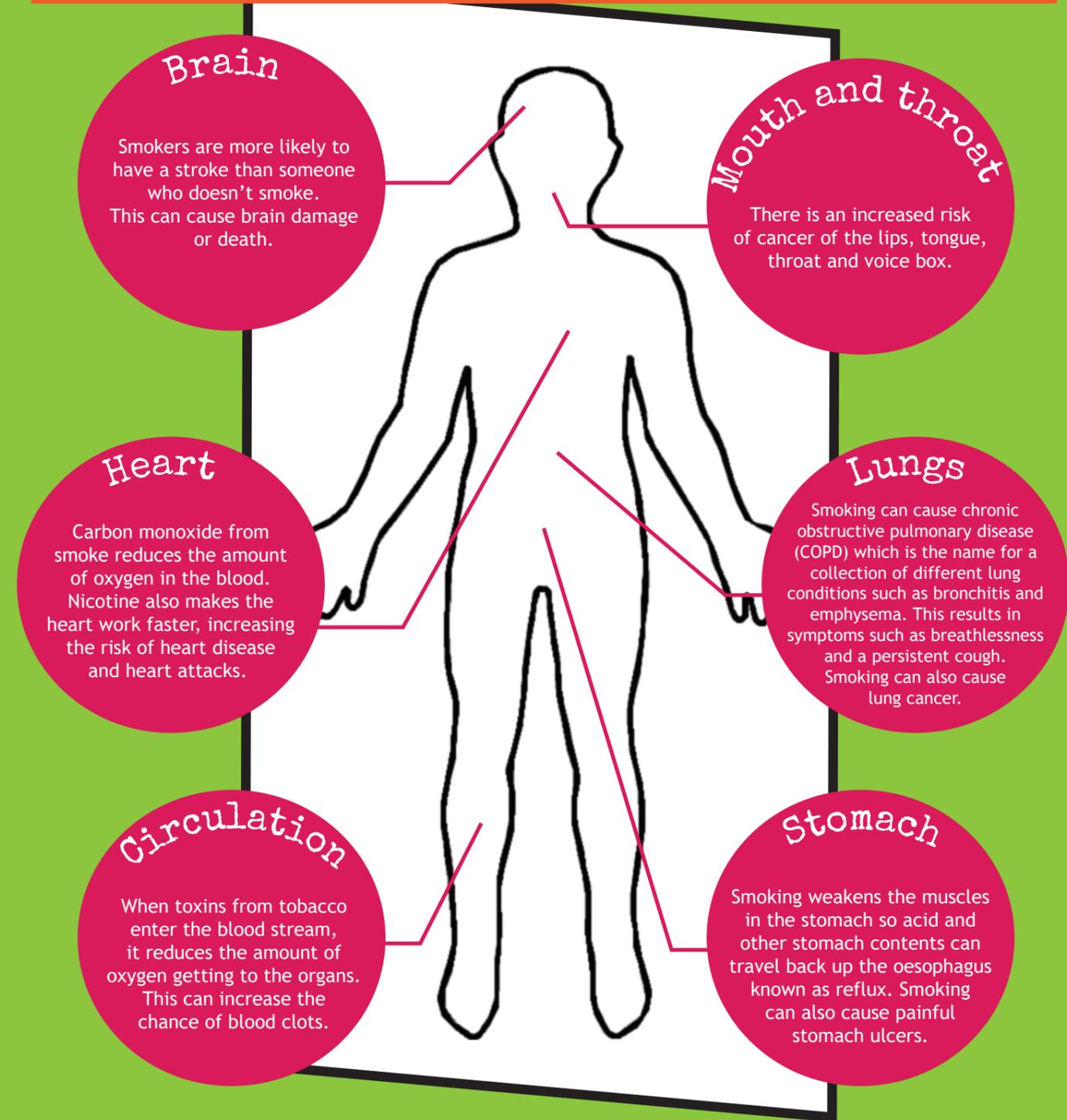


Unborn babies

When a pregnant woman smokes it goes straight into the bloodstream and through the placenta into the baby.

It stops nutrients reaching the baby and the chemicals in tobacco can cause damage to the baby's heart, slows down the speed they grow, and affects how their brain develops.

Quitting smoking before pregnancy reduces the possibility of stillbirth and premature birth.



You don't have to have been smoking for a long time for tobacco to have effect the way you look...



Skin

The poisons in tobacco reduce the amount of oxygen getting to the skin. This makes it look grey and dull, and can also cause cellulite to build up.

Teeth and tongue

Tobacco can stain teeth yellow and can make breath very smelly because of bacteria that collects on the tongue. It also causes problems with the gums, resulting in rotten teeth or even tooth loss.

Mouth and eyes

Smoking makes a person look old because it causes the skin around the mouth and eyes to wrinkle. It can also increase the risk of developing vision problems such as macular degeneration.

Fingers

Just like the teeth, tobacco stains fingers and nails yellow as well as making them smell.

If you smoke a cigarette, or use another tobacco product, the nicotine in tobacco reaches your brain in around ten seconds.



The first 'hit' of nicotine will make you feel relaxed and reduces levels of stress. This is why so many people use smoking to cope with demanding situations.

This response is only temporary as regular smoking changes the way the brain responds to nicotine.

As soon as you stop smoking, you will experience withdrawal symptoms. When you start smoking again, the withdrawal symptoms reduce and you become addicted to smoking.

Nicotine in tobacco makes the brain release a chemical called dopamine, which makes us feel happy. People with depression have low amounts of dopamine, so they feel the need to smoke to increase the levels in their body.

It is because of this that people with mental health problems have a higher dependency on smoking and find it very difficult to quit.



It is very common for people with mental health problems such as depression or schizophrenia to smoke.