



# Smoke Signals

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**Remember the Date: Nov. 17, 2005**

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## **New Research Shows Smoking More Dangerous Than Once Thought**

We're all familiar with the Surgeon General's warnings placed on cigarette packages. They've been around since the mid-60s, when the United States Surgeon General announced medical research showing that smoking was a definite cause of cancers of the lung and larynx in men and chronic bronchitis in both men and women. Later reports concluded that smoking causes a number of other diseases such as cancers of the bladder, esophagus, mouth and throat; cardiovascular diseases; and reproductive effects.

In a new report issued in May of this year, U.S. Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona released a new comprehensive report on smoking and health, revealing for the first time that smoking causes diseases in nearly every organ of the body. Published 40 years after the surgeon general's first report on smoking, this newest report finds that cigarette smoking is conclusively linked to diseases such as leukemia, cataracts, pneumonia and cancers of the cervix, kidney, pancreas and stomach.

According to the report, smoking kills an estimated 440,000 Americans each year. On average, men who smoke cut their lives short by 13.2 years, and female smokers lose 14.5 years. The economic toll exceeds \$157 billion each year in the United States - \$75 billion in direct medical costs and \$82 billion in lost productivity.

The report concludes that smoking reduces the overall health of smokers, contributing to such conditions as hip fractures, complications from diabetes, increased wound infections following surgery, and a wide range of reproductive complications. For every premature death caused each year by smoking, there are at least 20 smokers living with a serious smoking-related illness.

Another major conclusion, consistent with recent findings of other scientific studies, is that smoking so-called low-tar or low-nicotine cigarettes does not offer a health benefit over smoking regular or "full-flavor" cigarettes.

The report also concludes that quitting smoking has immediate and long-term benefits, reducing risks for diseases caused by smoking and improving health in general. Within minutes and hours after smokers inhale that last cigarette, their bodies begin a series of changes that continue for years. Among these health improvements are a drop in heart rate, improved circulation, and reduced risk of heart attack, lung cancer and stroke. By quitting smoking today a smoker can assure a healthier tomorrow.

It is never too late to stop smoking. Quitting smoking at age 65 or older reduces by nearly 50 percent a person's risk of dying of a smoking-related disease.

Smoking is literally killing our staff members, patients and visitors. Second-hand smoke hangs heavy around our doorways. St. Luke's is an organization that cares about wellness, we cannot continue to allow smoking where we can control it.

While we're not telling staff members they have to quit, it's no secret that we hope that many of our smokers will choose to quit smoking by November 17.

Smoking Cessation Classes will be available free of charge to St. Luke's staff members. Aids such as nicotine replacement gum, patches and lozenges will be available at cost from the Pharmacy and will be available in the Gift Shop.

***FREE***

**FreshStart Smoking Cessation  
Classes for St. Luke's  
employees and volunteers**

**7 p.m. Tuesdays**

**Aug. 23, Aug. 30, Sept. 6 and Sept. 13**

**in the boardroom**

**call 894-2408 to register**