

TACKLING INDIGENOUS SMOKING

Smoking and the Heart

Cardiovascular disease is the number 1
killer of Aboriginal and / Or Torres
Strait Islander people.

**YOUR HEART STARTS
BEATING BEFORE YOU
ARE BORN AND BEATS
ALL DAY EVERYDAY
FOR YOUR ENTIRE LIFE.**

What is Cardiovascular Disease (CVD)?

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the name given to many conditions that mean your heart and blood vessels aren't working the way they should be. The heart pumps blood and oxygen around the body which is needed for our body to work. When you smoke oxygen doesn't bind to the blood as well as it should, so there is less oxygen being pumped around your body.

Smoking can harden and cause blockages in your arteries and lead to an enlarged heart.

Smoking also increases your risk of having a stroke meaning a blood vessel in your brain may burst or become blocked.

Even if you survive the event your life will be changed forever. You may struggle with doing things you've always done or you may need to spend time away from your family in hospital.

CVD for the most part can be prevented. Quitting smoking, watching your weight, exercising and having good blood pressure are some key points.

Some symptoms you should tell your Doctor about if they happen at any point are:

- pain or pressure in the chest
- pain or discomfort in the arms, left shoulder, elbows, jaw, or back
- shortness of breath nausea and fatigue
- Light headedness or dizziness
- cold sweats

Keep your heart healthy

- Quit smoking
- See your GP or midwife for access to NRT (patches, gums, lozenges etc.) these are safer than continuing to smoke
- Tell your friends and family you're quitting
- Get your partner in on the act too if you can
- Practice the 4Ds - Delay, drink water, distract yourself and practice deep breathing
- Call the Quitline on

137 848

“The problem with heart disease is the first symptom is often fatal.” ~ Michael Phelps

