

## Worried about weight gain?

One of the most common barriers to quitting tobacco use is fear of gaining weight. While it is true that the average person who quits smoking will gain 6-10 pounds without any attempts to diet or exercise, the health benefits to quitting smoking greatly outweigh the risks. A smoker would have to gain about 100 pounds after quitting to make their health risks as high as when they smoked. Some of the negative health effects of smoking include: cancer, heart disease, stroke, chronic obstructive lung disease (COPD), infertility, preterm delivery, stillbirth and SIDS.

To avoid too much weight gain, try to focus on a healthy lifestyle— adding fruits and vegetables to your diet and increasing physical activity. Dieting at the same time as quitting smoking is often linked to relapse, so it is recommended that you do not attempt to do both at the same time.



If you are interested in being screened for diabetes or participating in diabetes care activities, please call the NARA Indian Health Clinic at (503)230-9875. If you are interested in quitting smoking or other tobacco use, please call the NARA Indian Health Clinic at (503)230-9875, or for free services call the Oregon Quit Line at 1(800)QUIT-NOW.



### Urban American Indian Tobacco Prevention & Education Network

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## Urban American Indian Tobacco Prevention & Education Network

# Diabetes & Tobacco Use



# Diabetes & Commercial Tobacco Use

*While quitting tobacco use may not be easy, it could be the best thing you can do to prevent the complications of diabetes. Contact your physician or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.*

## Complications with Diabetes<sup>1</sup>

### **Tobacco raises your blood sugar level.**

This makes it harder to control your diabetes. Nicotine and other products in tobacco smoke make it more difficult for insulin to work properly. Additionally, chewing tobacco is high in sugar.

### **If you use tobacco, it is likely you will experience even more trouble with your sight.**

Diabetes can block the tiny blood vessels in the eyes, a condition called retinopathy. Meanwhile, tobacco makes your eyes even less healthy.

### **If you smoke or chew tobacco and have diabetes, you will have a greater chance of developing gum disease and losing your teeth.**

The sugar and harsh chemicals in tobacco eat away at the teeth and gums.

### **If you have diabetes, smoking will increase the risk of nerve damage in all parts of your body, causing numbness and sometimes pain.**

This may occur because tobacco damages the blood vessels that carry oxygen and nutrients to the nerves. Smoking slows down blood flow and blocks blood vessels in the penis, and nerve damage reduces sensation.

### **You are more likely to have a heart attack or stroke and three times more likely to die of heart disease if you have diabetes and use tobacco.**

The nicotine in all tobacco products increases your heart rate. The carbon monoxide in tobacco smoke reduces oxygen in the blood.



Tobacco causes blood vessels to constrict. This means your heart has to work harder to pump blood throughout the body. Smoking makes blood cells stick together and chemicals in tobacco harm blood vessels so that fat attaches to the vessel walls even faster, causing them to clog. Uncontrolled blood glucose levels also cause blood vessels to narrow. Together, these symptoms lead to heart attack and stroke.

### **Even in people without diabetes, smoking triples the chances of developing kidney disease.**

Smoking increases blood pressure and affects chemicals in the body that control kidney function. Medications that successfully prevent kidney failure in most nonsmoking diabetics (ACE Inhibitors) may not help those that use tobacco.

### **It is extremely unusual for a person with diabetes to have a leg amputated due to blocked blood vessels unless they use tobacco.**

Tobacco slows the circulation in the smaller blood vessels. People with diabetes are already more likely to suffer from poor circulation in their feet and legs. Tobacco use can also aggravate foot ulcers, foot infections and blood vessel disease in the legs.

## Did you know?

- 38% of American Indian/Alaska Native Oregonians smoke<sup>1</sup>
- 16.3% of American Indian/Alaskan Native adults are diagnosed with diabetes<sup>2</sup>
- American Indian/Alaska Native adults are 2.3 times more likely to be diagnosed with diabetes and 3 times as likely to die from diabetes than non-Hispanic white adults<sup>2</sup>
- 30% of American Indian/Alaska Natives with diabetes are tobacco users<sup>3</sup>



1. This section adapted from Diabetes Australia (1999) Smoking and Diabetes— What you need to know. In *Diabetes and You: The Essential Guide*.  
2. 2004-5 Oregon Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey  
3. 2007 Indian Health Service Division of Diabetes Treatment and Prevention  
4. Morton, DE, et al. (2007) "Current Smoking & Type II Diabetes" AJPH