



What is Cardiovascular Disease?

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) includes disorders of the heart and blood vessels. CVDs are the leading cause of death in the United States. CVDs include heart attacks, angina, strokes, and peripheral vascular diseases.



How Smoking Damages the Cardiovascular System

- Diminishes flow of oxygen
- Promotes formation of fatty plaques in blood vessels
- Impairs vessel regeneration
- Contributes to the formation of blood clots
- Causes inflammation
- Carries deadly carbon monoxide throughout the body
- Exposes people to secondhand smoke, which increases the risk for CVD by an estimated 20–30%.²

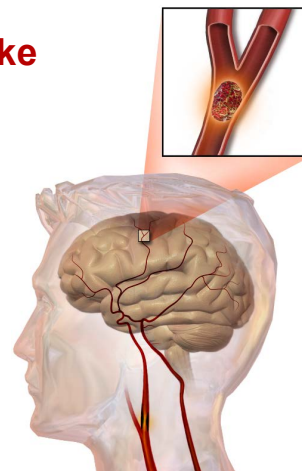
Roughly 30% of cardiovascular diseases are caused by smoking.¹ After quitting smoking, the risk of CVD falls rapidly, decreasing by about 50% within in one year.³ Within about five years of quitting, risk of CVD, including stroke, returns to that of an individual who has never smoked.

What is a Stroke?

A stroke is a manifestation of CVD of the arteries leading to and within the brain. A stroke occurs when the brain does not get sufficient oxygen, because a blood vessel to the brain is either blocked by a clot or bursts.

Acute Signs of Stroke

- Numbness or weakness, especially on one side of the body
- Confusion, difficulty speaking or understanding speech
- Trouble seeing
- Trouble walking or loss of balance
- Severe headache



The sudden onset of such symptoms may signal a stroke and warrant rapid medical attention. The sooner you treat a stroke, the better the outcome.

Free Help to Quit Tobacco Use

You can get free, confidential help to quit smoking, vaping, or chewing tobacco.

- Call 800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669)
- Or text READY to 200-400
- Or visit WiQuitLine.org



1. CDC Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/dhbsp/maps/hds-widget.htm>

2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014.

3. Lightwood JM, Glantz SA. Short-term economic and health benefits of smoking cessation: myocardial infarction and stroke. *Circulation* 1997;96:1089-96.

4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Smoking Cessation: A Report of the Surgeon General. (2020).