

Every cigarette smoked cuts at least five minutes off your life

Since 1987, countries the world over have marked *World No Tobacco Day* on 31 May - a initiative of the World Health Organisation (WHO) to highlight the health risks associated with tobacco use and advocate effective policies to reduce tobacco consumption.

Support for *World No Tobacco Day* has grown significantly over the years to the point that today many countries - including South Africa - mark *No Tobacco Month*, where awareness is heightened through an entire month of activities every May.

The WHO describes tobacco use as the number one preventable epidemic faced by the global health community. According to its statistics, tobacco use:

- Is the second cause of death globally (after hypertension)
- Currently kills 1 in 10 adults worldwide
- Will be responsible for the deaths of more than 5 million people this year (who will die from a tobacco-related heart attack, stroke, cancer, lung ailment or other disease)
- Will be responsible for the deaths of an additional 600 000 people - more than a quarter of them children - who will die from exposure to second-hand smoke.

Furthermore, the WHO estimates that having killed 100 million people during the 20th

century, tobacco use could kill 1 billion during the 21st century, with the annual death toll from the global epidemic of tobacco use rising to around 8 million people by 2030.

The benefits of quitting

The immediate health benefits of quitting smoking are substantial:

- Heart rate and blood pressure, which are abnormally high while smoking, begin to return to normal.
- Within a few hours, the level of carbon monoxide in the blood begins to decline. (Carbon monoxide reduces the blood's ability to carry oxygen.)
- Within a few weeks, people who quit smoking have improved circulation, produce less phlegm, and don't cough or wheeze as often.
- Within several months of quitting, people could potentially expect substantial improvements in lung function
- In addition, people who quit smoking will have an improved sense of smell, and food will taste better.

Source: www.cancer.gov

Please feel free to contact us should you need any help with your financial planning

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