

### Introduction

Smoking is the biggest cause of death and illness in the UK. Smokers are almost two times as likely to have a heart attack compared with non-smokers<sup>1</sup> and increase their risk of having over 50 health conditions. Smoking is the most preventable cause of cancer.<sup>2</sup>

### Risks

Smoking can increase the risk of developing or actively cause cancers, including lung, mouth, throat, breast, liver and kidney cancers. It damages the heart and can lead to coronary heart disease, heart attacks and strokes. It can also cause lung and respiratory disorders such as bronchitis, pneumonia, asthma and pneumonia. Smoking can lead to impotence and reduce fertility in both men and women.<sup>3</sup>

### Legislation

Second hand smoke also impacts health. It contributes to and causes a number of illnesses and disease.<sup>4</sup> To protect those who do not smoke, legislation and regulations have been brought in.

In July 2007, legislation made it illegal to smoking in all enclosed public places and workspaces in the UK. In 2015, it became an offence to smoke in a vehicle when children are present.

### Children and Smoking

Smoking during pregnancy affects both the mother and unborn baby's health. It increases the risk of complications, including miscarriage, premature birth, stillbirth and the baby having a low birth weight.<sup>5</sup>

Smoking and second hand smoke is especially bad for children's health. Children are at a higher risk of respiratory infections, asthmas, bacterial meningitis and cot death. Second hand smoke causes around 165,000 cases of disease in children every year.<sup>6</sup>

Despite it being illegal to sell tobacco or e-cigarettes to under-18s, two thirds of smokers start before the age of 18.<sup>7</sup> However, smoking in children and teenagers is decreasing every year, suggesting tobacco control policies designed to protect children are falling.<sup>8</sup>

## Relevant records held at RCPCH

- **Smoking Laws (2008-2011)**

*Ref: RCPCH/011/003/345*

Records relating to the 2007 Smoking Ban, the UK ban on smoking in cars when children are present and European legislation including news articles, correspondence, research into second hand smoke and display legislation. Also includes 'All Party Parliamentary Group on Smoking and Health' 2010 inquiry and Executive Summary.

- **Correspondence of the Academic Board (1986)**

*Ref: RCPCH/003/001/002/005*

Correspondence relating to matters of the Academic Board including an exhibition of children's posters about health education and smoking.

- **Comments on 'Smoking for Health' (1976)**

*Ref: RCPCH/003/025/003/001*

Comments on a publication from Royal College of Physicians of London on 'Smoking for Health', from minutes of the Executive Committee.

- **Doctors for Tobacco Law (1991)**

*Ref: RCPCH/004/010/061*

Update to BPA Council on Doctors for Tobacco Law regarding banning advertising and promotion of tobacco.

September 2017

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bhf.org.uk/heart-health/risk-factors/smoking> [accessed 18/09/2017]

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/causes-of-cancer/smoking-and-cancer> [accessed 18/09/2017]

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/2344.aspx> [accessed 18/09/2017]

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.smokefreeengland.co.uk/> [accessed 18/09/2017]

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/2344.aspx> [accessed 18/09/2017]

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/causes-of-cancer/smoking-and-cancer/passive-smoking> [accessed 18/09/2017]

<sup>7</sup> Action on Smoking and Health, March 2017

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/cancer-statistics/risk/childhood-smoking#heading-Four> [accessed 18/09/2017]