

# Important Facts on Smoking and COVID-19

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- ✓ Cigarette smoking **increases your risk of severe illness** from COVID-19.
- ✓ Cigarette smoking **reduces lung immunity** and **causes underlying conditions that increase risk for severe illness** from COVID, including heart and lung diseases and diabetes.
- ✓ For free help quitting commercial tobacco use\*, or staying tobacco-free, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or visit [www.quitlinenc.com](http://www.quitlinenc.com).

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

### Cigarette smoking increases your risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

If you smoke, now is a great time to quit. If you used to smoke, don't start again. If you never smoked, don't start. Smoking is a risk factor for progression, or worsening of COVID-19, with smokers having higher odds of COVID-19 progression than never smokers. (Patanavanich & Glantz, *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*, 2020)

### Cigarette smoking reduces lung immunity and causes underlying conditions that increase risk for severe illness from COVID, including heart and lung diseases and diabetes.

Cigarette smoking compromises the immune system, and that altered immunity is associated with increased risk for pulmonary infections (U.S. Surgeon General, 2014).

Cigarette smoking is a major risk factor for chronic lung disease (including asthma), diabetes, and many cancers, including lung cancer. (U.S. Surgeon General, 2014). People with underlying medical conditions are at a greater risk for severe COVID-19 illness (*Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, April 8, 2020).

### The relationship between the use of e-cigarettes, or vaping products, and risk of COVID-19 is less certain, because they are less-studied products.

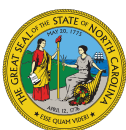
While studies showing specific risks of vaping or e-cigarette use are still relatively new compared to studies regarding smoking, some studies raise concern. Because vaping is known to cause inflammation in the lungs, some organizations suspect vaping may leave lung tissue fragile and more susceptible to infection. (American Lung Association, 2020) A recent study out of Stanford University showed that young people who had vaped were five times more likely to test positive for COVID-19 than never-users. (Gaiha, Cheng & Halpern-Felsher, *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 2020)

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Lungs start to heal two to 12 weeks after quitting smoking (U.S. Surgeon General, 2004). Counseling and FDA-approved medication can more than double your chances of quitting smoking. (US Preventive Services Task Force, 2015)

**Stay Informed** For frequently updated information, visit NCDHHS Coronavirus (COVID-19) at [www.ncdhhs.gov/covid19](http://www.ncdhhs.gov/covid19) and visit the CDC at [www.cdc.gov/COVID19](http://www.cdc.gov/COVID19).

\* Commercial tobacco products are all products for sale in the commercial market, including new products such as electronic cigarettes, not tobacco used for sacred and traditional ceremonies by many American Indian tribes and communities.



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