

Lighting up could leave YOU in the dark



SMOKING CAUSES BLINDNESS

Discover how smoking can damage your eyesight and put you at risk of avoidable sight loss

#eyequit

EYEHEALTHUK

Every day in the UK 100 people start to lose their sight, yet, over half of all sight loss is avoidable.¹

Smoking is the BIGGEST modifiable risk factor of sight loss with smokers risking blindness even if they are not genetically pre-disposed to it.²

Any amount of smoking, even light or occasional smoking, can affect your eye health. So, don't be blind to the risks, take a look at our list of #20Ways smoking damages your eyes and increases your risk of sight loss.

#1 Tobacco smoke causes biological changes in your eyes that can lead to poor eye health and loss of vision

#2 Cigarette smoke contains over 4,000 toxic chemicals that enter your eyes & increase your risk of sight loss by up to four times

#3 Tobacco chemicals damage the tiny blood vessels inside your eyes causing blockages and internal bleeding

#4 Tobacco chemicals interfere with the production of your tears – the tear film is important because it keeps the front of your eye healthy and helps your eyes focus clearly

#5 Smoking causes oxidative stress and damages your retina. The retina works like the film in a camera. If the film is damaged in any way, the picture will never be perfect

¹ RNIB

² Joint Associations of Diet, Lifestyle, and Genes with Age-Related Macular Degeneration, Kristin J. Meyers et al. 2015

#6 Tobacco reduces the amount of oxygen that reaches your macula. The macula is the part of the eye responsible for central, high-resolution vision

#7 Smoking is a key risk factor for Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD), the UK's leading cause of blindness in the UK

#8 Research published in British Medical Journal³ suggests 1 in 5 cases of AMD are caused by tobacco consumption

#9 On average smokers develop AMD five years earlier than non-smokers

#10 Smoking is a major risk factor in the development of cataracts

#11 The risk of nuclear cataracts is three times greater in smokers

#12 Smoking is a significant risk factor for developing diabetic retinopathy. Diabetic retinopathy is one of the top five causes of sight loss in the UK

#13 Smoking increases your risk of dry eye syndrome – the leading cause of eye irritation in over 65s

#14 Smoking is associated with the development of thyroid eye disease (TED). Smokers are up to eight times more likely to suffer from this potentially sight threatening condition which affects up to 400,000 people in UK⁴

³ British Medical Journal, Vol. 328, S. 537

⁴ Estimate taken from National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

#15 Smokers have increased prevalence of colour vision deficiency

#16 Nicotine poisoning can make it difficult to clearly distinguish colours with a red or green hue

#17 Smokers are twice as likely to suffer Uveitis – a painful inflammation of the middle layer of the eye – than non-smokers

#18 Smoking increases the risk of contact lens wearers suffering corneal ulcers. If left untreated corneal ulcers can lead to severe vision loss and even loss of the eye

#19 Smoking in pregnancy affects the development of your unborn baby and increases the risk of your child having a squint

#20 It's not just your eyes that suffer. Secondhand smoke increases the risk of your loved-ones suffering sight loss.

Now you know the facts – what are you waiting for? If you're a smoker make today the day you quit for good.

Visit quitnow.smokefree.nhs.uk for FREE advice and local support to help you stop smoking – it could just save your sight.

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