

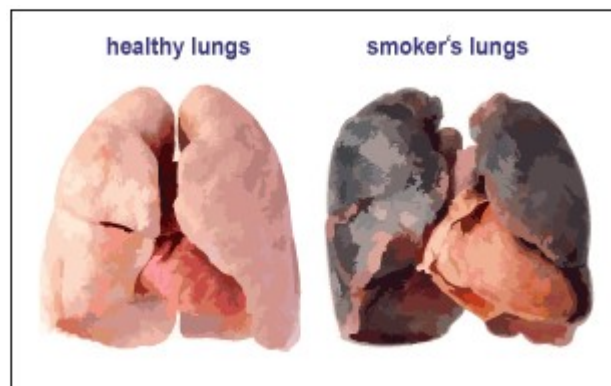
## Smoking and health

Smoking is very harmful to health. It causes around 80 per cent of deaths from **lung cancer**, **bronchitis** and **emphysema** in the UK, and almost a fifth of UK deaths from heart disease.



Tobacco smoke contains many harmful substances. These include:

- tar
- nicotine
- carbon monoxide



A normal lung and a lung from a smoker

## Tar

Tar causes cancer of the lungs, mouth and throat. It coats the surface of the breathing tubes and the alveoli. This causes coughing and damages the alveoli, making it more difficult for gas exchange to happen.

Cells in the lining of the breathing tubes produce sticky mucus to trap dirt

and microbes. Cells with tiny hair-like parts, called **cilia**, normally move the mucus out of the lungs.

Hot smoke and tar from smoking damages the cilia. So smokers cough to move the mucus and are more likely to get bronchitis.

## Nicotine

Nicotine is **addictive** - it causes a smoker to want more cigarettes. Nicotine also increases the heart rate and blood pressure, and makes blood vessels narrower than normal. This can lead to heart disease.

## Carbon monoxide

Carbon monoxide is a gas that takes the place of oxygen in red blood cells. This reduces the amount of oxygen that the blood can carry. This means that the circulatory system has to work harder, causing heart disease.

### Drugs and health

**Drugs** are substances that have effects on the body. Medicines are drugs that help people suffering from pain or disease. Other drugs, often called recreational drugs, are taken for pleasure.

Some recreational drugs are **legal**, such as tobacco, alcohol and caffeine. Most other recreational drugs are **illegal**, such as cannabis, ecstasy and heroin. Recreational drugs are **addictive**, and they may be **depressants** or **stimulants**.

All drugs can damage the liver, because it is the liver that breaks drugs down in the body. Any drug that is misused can cause damage to the body, as well as personal and social problems. Injecting any drug with a needle and syringe that someone else has used may lead to a number of diseases from infected blood, including HIV and hepatitis.

## Depressants

Depressants slow down messages in the brain and along the nerves. Alcohol is a depressant. It is found in beer, wines and spirits such as vodka.

Solvents, cannabis and heroin are also depressants.



Some alcoholic drinks

Here are some of the typical effects depressants have on the body:

- feelings of well-being
- lowered inhibition
- slowed thinking
- slowed muscular activity
- a distorted view of the world, or hallucinations



Cans containing solvents



Cannabis and smoking materials



Heroin and needle

Some of the long-term effects of depressants on the body include damage to the liver, brain and heart. They can also have the following effects:

- alcohol can cause weight gain
- solvent abuse causes a rash around the nose and mouth
- cannabis causes loss of memory and concentration, as well as an increased risk of mental illness.

## Stimulants

Stimulants speed up messages in the brain and along the nerves. This makes you feel more alert. Caffeine is a stimulant and is found in cola drinks, coffee and tea. It makes you feel more energetic and alert, but it can also cause insomnia (difficulty in sleeping), headaches and nervousness.

Cocaine, ecstasy and amphetamines are also stimulants. They make you feel more energetic and confident, but they can damage the liver and heart. They can also cause loss of memory and concentration, and bring an increased risk of mental illness.



Cocaine



Ecstasy pills