



When you stop smoking ...

- Your eyes are **not exposed** to tobacco smoke any more, which **helps prevent or slow down further damage**.
- You **reduce your risk** of vision loss from age-related **macular degeneration** and **cataracts**.
- The eyes of the **people around you** are **no longer affected** by secondhand smoke.

For advice or practical help

Talk to a health professional

Your eye health professional, GP and pharmacist are trained to support you. Your GP or pharmacist can help you decide if you want to use Champix, Zyban or nicotine patches with nicotine lozenges, inhalator, mouth spray or gum to help manage your cravings. Medications are cheaper with a script from your GP through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

Call the Quitline 13 7848

Quitline is a friendly, confidential telephone service. For the cost of a local call, trained Quitline counsellors provide tailored information and practical advice just for you.

Talking with a Quitline counsellor can increase your chance of quitting successfully. You can also ask your eye health professional or GP for a referral for Quitline to call you.

Visit www.quit.org.au

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A partnership promoting eye health and vision care



Smoking & the health of your eyes



Smoking affects your **whole body** including your **eyes**.

If you smoke, you increase your risk of many health problems. Often people who smoke are not aware that this also means they are more likely to have eye health problems.

There is no safe level of smoking.

If you smoke you are at increased risk of developing eye health problems compared to people who don't smoke because:

- Cigarettes contain thousands of chemicals which enter the blood stream, damaging blood vessels throughout the body including the eyes.
- These chemicals can cause damage to the macula and retina at the back of the eye which may then affect eyesight.

The good news is your body starts to recover the day you stop smoking.

Stopping smoking can reduce your risk of developing eye problems that threaten your sight. It is very important to visit your eye health professional regularly to discuss the health of your eyes and seek advice on stopping smoking.

If you smoke, you are more likely to develop:

- **Age-related macular degeneration (AMD)**
AMD affects the centre of your vision, making it harder to drive, read and watch TV. It often develops slowly with age, you may not notice it at first. Stopping smoking reduces your chance of developing AMD.
- **Cataracts**
A cataract is a clouding of the lens inside the eye which may result in blurring of vision. Early on, cataracts may be managed by getting new glasses when needed.

If glasses do not help, you may need surgery. Stopping smoking can help prevent cataracts from getting worse.
- **Infected and inflamed eyes**
This includes dry eye and contact lens-related problems. These conditions can cause redness, pain and blurry or decreased vision.

Secondhand cigarette smoke irritates the eyes of people who do not smoke. It causes many symptoms including stinging eyes, burning or prickling sensations, watery eyes and redness.



'Many people are not aware that tobacco smoking causes damage to their eyes. Stopping smoking is important for your general health, as well as your vision and eye health.'

Associate Professor
Laura Downie