

Fastfacts

Oral health and smoking

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Key points

- all forms of tobacco use are known to cause oral cancer
 - the smoking and chewing of tobacco products has many detrimental effects on the oral cavity ranging from the cosmetic to the potentially fatal
 - ASH Scotland has teamed up with the Oral Health Foundation, British Dental Association and NHS Inform Scotland to [design a stop smoking advice card](#)
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Dental effects

- smoking is associated with chronic destructive periodontal disease (inflammatory disorders of the tissue which surrounds and supports the teeth)
 - smoking has been shown to be associated with deeper periodontal pockets (where gums pull away from teeth and form spaces which become infected) and more bone loss to the jaw
 - tobacco use is a risk factor for tooth decay and bad breath
 - smokers lose more teeth than non-smokers and it can be many years before a former smoker's risk of tooth loss falls to that of a never smoker
 - tobacco use impairs wound healing and smokers have decreased levels of saliva which in turn affects wound healing in the oral cavity and the mouth's ability to fight disease
 - smoking reduces the blood flow in the gums and supporting tissues of the tooth and makes them more likely to become inflamed
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Cancer

- oral cavity cancer risk is three times higher in current smokers compared with never-smokers and the pharyngeal cancer risk is nearly seven times higher in current smokers compared with never-smokers
- oral cavity cancer risk in men is almost three times higher in those who have smoked the most cigarettes for the most years, compared with those who have smoked the least for the fewest years
- oral cavity cancer risk in women is more than four times higher in the heaviest- and longest-smokers versus the lightest- and shortest-smokers

Action on Smoking & Health (Scotland) (ASH Scotland) is a registered Scottish charity (SC 010412) and a company limited by guarantee (Scottish company no 141711)

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