

**31ST MAY 2026**



# WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY



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## **WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY, 31ST MAY 2026**

### **“Unmasking the appeal – countering nicotine and tobacco addiction”.**

At the Sir Brian Bell Foundation, we proudly support World No Tobacco Day and remain committed to providing communities with free, accurate and accessible health information. By raising awareness, we aim to empower individuals and families to make informed decisions that lead to healthier, longer lives.

Tobacco use causes lasting effects to both smokers and non-smokers all over the world causing over 7 million deaths each year which could have been prevented. Smoking harms nearly every organ in the body. It is a major risk factor for a wide range of serious health conditions, including cancers (particularly lung, throat, and oral cancers), heart disease, stroke, chronic respiratory diseases, and peripheral vascular disease, which can lead to blood clots, amputation, and gangrene. Even occasional smoking can cause long-term damage. Beyond its impact on individuals, tobacco places a significant burden on families, communities, and already strained health systems.

The use of Tobacco is a major public health problem in PNG with roughly 40% of the population consuming tobacco according to Tobacco Atlas and is the leading cause of cancer, cardiovascular disease, and respiratory diseases in PNG. Additionally with the use of both tobacco and betel nut across the country there are increased risks of developing oral cancers. Limited access to healthcare and health information in many communities makes tobacco use even more dangerous, contributing to widespread health challenges and increased strain on national health systems.

Quitting smoking has immediate and long-term benefits. Within days, the body begins to repair itself, blood pressure improves, lung function increases, and the risk of heart attack begins to decline. Over time, the risk of developing serious diseases drops significantly. Talk to a medical professional or friend if you are having trouble quitting smoking.

“Don’t let tobacco control your life. Talk to a medical professional and take the first step to quit. It’s never too late to make positive changes for your health and the wellbeing of those around you. Quitting may just save your life,” said Sir Brian Bell Foundation CEO, Bronwyn Wright.

This World No Tobacco Day, we urge everyone to learn more about the dangers of tobacco, protect those around you from second-hand smoke, and commit to quitting. Every step towards a tobacco-free life is a step towards a healthier future.

### **WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION:**

World No Tobacco Day is marked annually on 31 May - bringing together governments, health organizations, civil society and youth from around the world to raise awareness of the threats of tobacco use and the tactics used by the tobacco industry, and to promote effective measures to end nicotine and tobacco addiction. Building on the momentum of the 2025 campaign, World No Tobacco Day 2026 reaffirms WHO’s commitment to exposing the evolving strategies of the tobacco and nicotine industry and to advancing policies that protect young people and communities from addiction.

### **THE 2026 CAMPAIGN AIMS TO:**

expose the industry’s strategies - including the use of synthetic nicotine, nicotine salts and analogues designed to enhance addiction potential while being marketed as innovative or even less harmful, promote stronger policy action - through bans on flavours, advertising and promotion (including digital and social media), and through stricter regulation of packaging and product design that increase youth appeal; and empower youth and the public - by providing knowledge and tools to recognize and resist industry influence and by ensuring access to evidence-based cessation support.

### **Learn more:**

<https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-no-tobacco-day>

The Sir Brian Bell Foundation is proud to support health and education initiatives in Papua New Guinea. Stay up to date with all the latest news from the Foundation and the programs and individuals it supports via our Facebook page:

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## TOBACCO

Every year, more than 7 million people die from tobacco use according to World Health Organization (WHO). Tobacco use remains one of the biggest threats to humans globally both from direct users and second-hand smoke. No amount of tobacco exposure is safe, with 1.6 million non-smokers dying each year due to second hand smoke.

### WHAT CHEMICALS ARE IN TOBACCO SMOKE?

There are approximately 600 ingredients in cigarettes according to the American Lung Association, and when burned, they create more than 7,000 chemicals, 69 of these chemicals are known to cause cancer, and many are toxic. Some of these chemicals include:

- **Acetone:** found in nail polish remover.
- **Acetic Acid:** an ingredient in hair dye
- **Ammonia:** a common household cleaner
- **Arsenic:** used in rat poison
- **Benzene:** found in rubber cement
- **Butane:** used in lighter fluid
- **Cadmium:** active component in battery acid
- **Carbon Monoxide:** released in car exhaust fumes.
- **Formaldehyde:** embalming fluid
- **Hexamine:** found in barbecue lighter fluid
- **Lead:** used in batteries
- **Naphthalene:** an ingredient in mothballs
- **Methanol:** a main component in rocket fuel
- **Nicotine:** used as an insecticide
- **Tar:** material for paving roads
- **Toluene:** used to manufacture paint

## LONG TERM EFFECTS OF SMOKING

Every cigarette is doing damage to your body. Long term smokers are at a higher risk of developing a range of potentially deadly diseases, including:

- Smoking can cause cancer almost anywhere in your body, including the lungs, throat, oesophagus, pancreas, kidney, liver, colon, tongue, bladder, stomach and more.
- Lung Diseases such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), which includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema.
- Heart disease, heart attack, and stroke.
- Increased risk of blood clots, which block blood flow to the heart, brain, or leg, sometimes resulting in amputation or gangrene.

## SMOKING AND PREGNANCY

Smoking during pregnancy increases the risk of health problems for developing babies, including preterm birth, low birth weight, and birth defects. Smoking during and after pregnancy also increases the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Additionally, e-cigarettes and other tobacco products containing nicotine (the addictive drug found in tobacco) are not safe to use during pregnancy, according to the Centres of Disease Control and Prevention. Nicotine is a health danger for pregnant women and developing babies and can damage a developing baby's brain and lungs. Quitting tobacco is one of the most important ways you can protect your health and your baby's health. While it is better to quit smoking before becoming pregnant, quitting at any time during pregnancy gives your baby a better chance of a healthy start in life.



### IS IT TOO LATE TO QUIT SMOKING?

Quitting smoking improves your health and wellbeing no matter your age. Quitting is likely to add years to your life, help you breathe easier, save money and reduce your risk of cancer, heart attack, stroke, and lung disease. As soon as you stop smoking, your body begins to repair itself. How well your body can recover will depend on the number of cigarettes you normally smoke and the length of time you have been smoking.

#### The health benefits of quitting from Quit Australia include:

- **Within 6 hours:** Your heart rate slows, and your blood pressure becomes more stable.
  - **Within a day:** The level of carbon monoxide in your blood has dropped, oxygen can more easily reach your heart and muscles, and your fingertips become warmer and your hands steadier.
  - **Within a week:** Your sense of taste and smell may improve, and you have higher blood levels of protective antioxidants such as vitamin C.
  - **Within 3 months:** You're coughing and wheezing less, your lungs' natural cleaning system is recovering, becoming better at removing mucus, tar and dust from your lungs, your immune system is beginning its recovery so your body is better at fighting off infection and your blood is less thick and sticky, blood flow to your hands and feet has improved
  - **Within 6 months:** You are less likely to be stressed or coughing up phlegm.
  - **After 1 year:** Your lungs will be healthier, and breathing will be easier than if you'd kept smoking.
  - **Within 5 years:** There is a large drop in your risk of stroke, which will continue to gradually decrease over time. For women, within five years, the risk of cervical cancer is the same as someone who has never smoked.
- **After 10 years:** Your risk of lung cancer is lower than that of a continuing smoker (provided the disease was not already present when you quit).
  - **After 20 years:** Your risk of heart attack and stroke is close to that of a person who has never smoked.

### QUIT SMOKING TIPS

It's never too late to quit smoking, break the habit and say goodbye to smoking for good by reminding yourself why you are quitting smoking, ask others to not smoke around you and avoid areas where you commonly smoke out of habit. Try a new sport, bring a supportive friend to try a new activity. Remember to keep the following 4 Ds in mind when you have a craving:

- **Delay:** Remember that the worst cravings last for only a few minutes and will become even less frequent the longer you have quit.
- **Deep breathe:** This should help you relax; remember why you want to quit and give you time to focus your mind on something else.
- **Drink water:** It is essential to drink plenty of fluids to help flush the nicotine and other toxins out of your system.
- **Do something else:** You could go for a walk, talk to a friend, eat an apple, meditate, or read a book.

# QUIT TODAY

Every cigarette is doing you damage and  
can reduce your lifespan by 11 minutes.

