



Vision

What you should know

Ten reasons to quit smoking and save your eyes



Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death worldwide. Tobacco use raises the chances of heart and lung disease. It has an impact on your risk for certain vision threatening eye conditions.¹

Here are 10 reasons to not use tobacco:

1. **Cataracts:** Smoking cigarettes doubles the chances developing cataracts (a clouding of the lens of the eye).²
2. **Age-related macular degeneration:** Smoking triples the chances of getting macular degeneration (the loss of central vision). Smoking can also make it worse if you already have it. Macular degeneration is leading cause of blindness in those over the age of 65.³
3. **Glaucoma:** Cigarette smokers greatly raise their chances of developing glaucoma (high eye pressure that damages the optic nerve). This is another leading cause of blindness.⁴
4. **Diabetic retinopathy (for those with diabetes):** Smoking raises the risk of changes in the blood vessels inside the eye that can cause blindness.⁵

5. **Dry eyes:** The irritating effects of cigarette smoke can cause red, dry, scratchy eyes.⁶
6. **Problems with contact lens wear:** Smokers have a harder time wearing contact lenses than non-smokers. This is due to the dry-eye effects of smoking. They also have a greater chance of getting sores on the surface of the eye that can lead to blindness.⁷
7. **Graves' Disease:** Tobacco use increases the chance of developing eye problems related to thyroid disease.⁸
8. **Uveitis:** Smokers double their risk of getting inflammation in the eye that can lead to cataracts and glaucoma.⁹
9. **Secondhand smoke:** Secondhand smoke can cause dry eyes and make your contact lenses uncomfortable. Even if you don't smoke, being around someone who does can hurt your health.
10. **Birth defects:** Women who smoke while pregnant raise their chances of having a baby with lazy eye and facial defects involving the eyes.¹⁰

Vision loss related to cigarette smoking can be prevented.

If you smoke – stop.

Take charge of your eye health. Make sure a yearly comprehensive eye exam is part of your wellness plan.



¹ WHO REPORT on the global TOBACCO epidemic, 2011
Warning about the dangers of tobacco

² Sanjay P. Zodpey* and Suresh N. Ughade, "Tobacco Smoking and Risk of Age-Related Cataract in Men." WHO 04 September 2006

³ Thornton J, Edwards R, Mitchell P, Harrison RA, Buchan I, Kelly SP. "Smoking and age-related macular degeneration: a review of association." *Eye*, 2005 Sep;19(9):935-44.
"Smoking and age-related macular degeneration: a review of association."

⁴ Bonovasa S, Filioussia K, Tsantes A, Peponisb, A. "Epidemiological association between cigarette smoking and primary open-angle glaucoma: a meta-analysis." *Public Health* Volume 118, Issue 4, June 2004, Pages 256–261

⁵ New York State Dept of Health, "Smoking Can Lead to Vision Loss or Blindness"

⁶ Tu EY, Rheinstrom S. "Dry eye." In: Yanoff M, Duker JS, eds. *Ophthalmology*. 3rd ed. St. Louis, MO: Mosby Elsevier; 2008:chap

⁷ Mehrdad Mohammadpour, Zahra Mohajerzadifard, Alireza Khodabande, and Payman Vahedi, "Antibiotic Susceptibility Patterns of Pseudomonas Corneal Ulcers in Contact Lens Wearers," *Middle East Afr J Ophthalmol* 2011 Jul-Sep; 18(3): 228–231.

⁸ Hegediüs L, Brix TH, Vestergaard P. Relationship between cigarette smoking and Graves' ophthalmopathy. *J Endocrinol Invest*. 2004 Mar;27(3):265-71.

⁹ Lin P, et al "Cigarette smoking as a risk factor for uveitis" *Ophthalmology* 2010; DOI: 10.1016/j.ophtha.2009.08.011.

¹⁰ Hackshaw A, Rodeck C and Boniface S. "Maternal smoking in pregnancy and birth defects: a systematic review based on 173 687 malformed cases and 11.7 million controls." *Human Reproduction Update* July 11, 2011

UnitedHealthcare vision coverage provided by or through UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company, located in Hartford, Connecticut, UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company of New York, located in Islandia, New York, or their affiliates. Administrative services provided by Spectera, Inc., United HealthCare Services, Inc. or their affiliates. Plans sold in Texas use policy form number VPOL.06.TX or VPOL.13.TX and associated COC form number VCOC.INT.06.TX or VCOC.CER.13.TX.