



Women and Tobacco

Women and smoking

Nearly 174,000 women die each year from smoking-related illnesses – the leading of which are lung cancer, heart disease and lung disease.

In the United States, about 18% of adult women and 23% of adult men smoke. Although smoking is more prevalent among men than women, the gap between the two has narrowed due to a more marked decline in smoking prevalence among men and direct targeting of women by the tobacco industry.

The Tobacco industry and women

The tobacco industry targets women through multiple marketing strategies. Female-directed strategies focus on packaging, branding, and messaging. These ads may:

- Portray smoking as independent, desirable and glamorous.
- Depict smoking as a way to lose or control weight.
- Attract women to female-specific brands with feminine packaging, such as Camel No 9, Virginia Slims, Capri, and Misty.

Smoking during pregnancy

The negative health conferred by smoking can affect all women, but women of childbearing age may be especially vulnerable. Smoking or exposure to second-hand smoke during pregnancy can increase the risk of:

- ectopic pregnancies.
- spontaneous abortion.

- low birth weight infants.
- sudden infant death syndrome.
- fetal brain damage and developmental problems.

Women who smoke and are not pregnant have an increased risk of infertility compared to women who do not smoke.

For women who are pregnant or thinking about becoming pregnant, quitting smoking will greatly benefit their health and the health of their babies. Because of this, women are more likely to quit during pregnancy than any other time in their lives.

Women and quitting

- Quitting tobacco use greatly reduces the risk of dying prematurely regardless of age, how long one has smoked, or the severity of nicotine addiction.
- Research shows that women may be more likely than men to use multiple quit strategies including counseling, self-help materials and nicotine replacement therapy.
- Support from family, friends or even strangers can play an important role in helping one quit and overcome challenges during the process.

If you are interested in quitting smoking, contact RHAMC for help!