

Quitting smoking cuts your risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 30–40%

14 November 2023 - A new brief, jointly developed by WHO, the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) and the University of Newcastle, unveils that quitting smoking can lower the risk of developing type 2 diabetes by as much as 30–40%.

IDF estimates that 537 million people have diabetes, a number that continues to rise making diabetes the ninth cause of death globally. Type 2 diabetes is one of the most prevalent chronic diseases worldwide, accounting for over 95% of all diabetes cases. However, type 2 diabetes is often preventable.

Quitting smoking not only reduces the risk of developing type 2 diabetes but also substantially improves the management and reduces the risk of diabetes complications. Evidence suggests that smoking influences the body's ability to regulate blood sugar levels, which can cause type 2 diabetes.

Smoking also increases the risk of diabetes-related complications such as cardiovascular disease, kidney failure and blindness. Smoking also delays wound healing and increases the risk of lower limb amputations, posing a significant burden on health systems.

“The International Diabetes Federation strongly encourages people to stop smoking to reduce their risk of diabetes and, if they have diabetes, help avoid complications. We call on governments to introduce policy measures that will discourage people from smoking and remove tobacco smoke from all public spaces,” explains Prof. Akhtar Hussain, President of the International Diabetes Federation

The message is clear: quitting smoking is not just about healthier lungs and hearts; it's also a concrete step in reducing the risk of type 2 diabetes.

“Health professionals play a vital role in motivating and guiding individuals with type 2 diabetes in their journey to quit tobacco. Simultaneously, governments must take the crucial step of ensuring all indoor public places, workplaces and public transport are completely smoke-free. These interventions are essential safeguards against the onset and progression of this and many other chronic diseases” said Dr Ruediger Krech, WHO, Director of Health Promotion

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