

Quit smoking for good this New Year!

A word from our expert

Thinking of quitting smoking? **Dr Anjali Mahto, Consultant Dermatologist** tells us how smoking affects the skin, giving you an extra incentive to ditch the habit for good. She explains *“Unlike damage to the heart or lungs, the effects on skin are often outwardly visible. Not only is smoking related to the development of certain skin disorders, it is a major culprit in premature ageing of the skin.”*



Here are the key ways smoking can affect your skin:

Premature Skin Ageing

Women seem to be more susceptible to this than men. It commonly manifests as fine lines around the eyes and mouth at an earlier age than non-smokers.

Poor Wound Healing

There are a large number of studies that demonstrate that smoking will delay wound healing – including wounds created by surgery. There are higher rates of wound infection, decreased wound strength, skin graft failure, necrosis (death of tissue), and blood clot formation.

Smoking and Skin Cancer

Smokers are at higher risk of developing a type of skin cancer called squamous cell carcinoma (SCC). Even individuals that only smoke a few cigarettes a day remain at risk. It's thought that tobacco found in cigarettes acts to suppress the immune system, allowing cancer cells to evade recognition. Whilst SCC is easily treated if found early, it does have the potential to metastasise (spread) to other parts of the body and can potentially be life-threatening.

Inflammatory Skin Disorders

Smokers have a higher risk of developing **psoriasis**, which results in dry, scaly patches on the body. Nicotine is thought to directly affect the immune system, potentially triggering psoriasis in those who have an underlying tendency to develop the condition.

Both **hidradentis suppurativa** and **lupus** are found more frequently in smokers, with lupus sufferers responding less well to treatment than non-smokers.

Smoking & Viral Infections of the Skin

Smoking enhances the risk of developing genital warts, possibly due to the immunosuppressive effects of nicotine. Smokers also have a higher risk of developing wart virus-related cancers including cancer of the vulva, anus & penis.

So remember, quit this new year and feel the benefit to all the organs of your body – skin included!

For further information please contact:

lisa@britishskinfoundation.org.uk or call 020 7391 6347



About the BSF

The **British Skin Foundation** is the only UK charity dedicated to raising funds for skin disease and skin cancer research. Our unwavering commitment to funding quality research means we won't stop until we've found cures for common skin problems like eczema and acne through to potential killers like malignant melanoma. To date we've raised £15 million to fund research projects since 1996.

Find us online here:

www.britishskinfoundation.org.uk
www.facebook.com/leadingthefightagainstskindisease
www.twitter.com/bsfcharity

www.ittakesseven.org.uk
www.facebook.com/ittakes7
www.twitter.com/ittakes7