

The Pennington Biomedical Research Center is a world-renowned nutrition research center.

Mission:

To promote healthier lives through research and education in nutrition and preventive medicine.

The Pennington Center has several research areas, including:

- Clinical Obesity Research
- Experimental Obesity
- Functional Foods
- Health and Performance Enhancement
- Nutrition and Chronic Diseases
- Nutrition and the Brain
- Dementia, Alzheimer's and healthy aging
- Diet, exercise, weight loss and weight loss maintenance

The research fostered in these areas can have a profound impact on healthy living and on the prevention of common chronic diseases, such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, hypertension and osteoporosis.

The Division of Education provides education and information to the scientific community and the public about research findings, training programs and research areas, and coordinates educational events for the public on various health issues.

We invite people of all ages and backgrounds to participate in the exciting research studies being conducted at the Pennington Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. If you would like to take part, visit the clinical trials web page at www.pbrc.edu or call (225) 763-3000.



Pennington Biomedical Research Center

6400 Perkins Road
Baton Rouge, LA 70808
225-763-2500

Visit Our Website at:
www.pbrc.edu

**Pennington Nutrition Series No 65, 2010
Authors**

Beth Kalicki
Heli J. Roy, PhD, RD

Division of Education

Phillip Brantley, PhD, Director

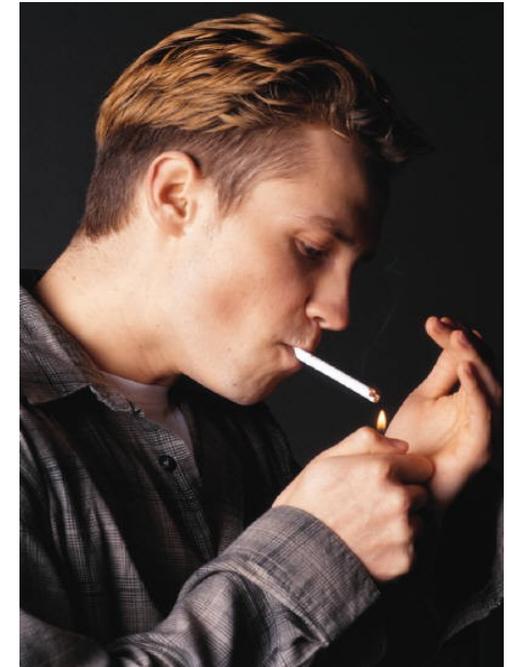
Pennington Biomedical Research Center

Claude Bouchard, PhD, Executive Director

1/10



Smoking and Your Heart



Pennington Biomedical Research Center

Promoting Healthier Lives Through Research
and Education in Nutrition and Preventive
Medicine

The Effects of Smoking on Your Heart

- The Surgeon General has named smoking the “leading preventable cause of disease and deaths in the United States.”
- Smoking causes an increase in heart rate, raises blood pressure, as well as causes the blood vessels to contract; thus making it harder for the body to circulate oxygen.
- Smoking causes a temporary increase in blood pressure which makes the heart work harder.
- Many smokers feel that smoking relaxes them, but in actuality, it really stresses their bodies.
- Smokers have a 2 to 3 times greater chance of developing heart disease or having a heart attack, when compared to nonsmokers.
- Cigarettes lower the level of good cholesterol (HDL), which helps to clear out bad cholesterol (LDL) in the blood.
- Carbon Monoxide, a product of tobacco smoke, tends to increase LDL Cholesterol levels, as well as levels of white blood cells and other risk factors for heart disease.
- Smoking is a risk factor for the development of atherosclerosis which causes hardened arteries.

- Coronary heart disease and stroke, the primary cardiovascular diseases caused by smoking, are the first and third leading causes of death in the United States.
- People who smoke pipes or cigars tend to have a higher risk of death from coronary heart disease and stroke.
- Even if you smoke low tar nicotine cigarettes rather than normal cigarettes, it does not reduce your risk of coronary heart disease.
- According to research, if you smoke, have high cholesterol, and high blood pressure, your risk of having a heart attack is eight times more than that of a nonsmoker.
- People who are consistently exposed to second-hand smoke tend to have 1/3 to 1/2 the risk that smokers have for cardiovascular diseases.
- Cigarette smokers have raised fibrinogen levels and platelet counts; causing blood to be more sticky.
- Smokers have a greater risk of being diagnosed with peripheral vascular disease, which is caused by blocked blood vessels in the legs or feet.

- Nicotine in cigarettes promotes insulin resistance, which is a pre-diabetic condition that raises blood sugar concentrations higher than normal.
- The long term benefits of quitting smoking include: reduction in risk of stroke, reduction in repeated bypass grafting operations, reduction in lethal arrhythmias, as well as secondary cardiovascular events and revascularization procedures after bypass surgery.
- Within 2 to 3 years after stopping smoking, the risk of having a heart attack will be the same as a person who has never smoked.
- After smoking cessation, the risk of stroke decreases. Over a period of 5 to 15 years, former smokers have the same risk of stroke as nonsmokers.
- The cessation of smoking greatly reduces the risk of death or a second heart attack in adults who have coronary heart disease.
- According to American Heart Association, individuals will have heightened sense of smell and taste, and an improved digestive system after stopping smoking.