



May 12, 2003  
National Women's Check-Up Day

## More Information About *Tobacco & Smoking*

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. It is a deadly epidemic that is causing serious health problems among women. About 23 million women smoke, putting them at increased risk for many smoking-related diseases.

- ❖ Teenage girls are smoking almost as much as teenage boys. Girls have less knowledge of the adverse consequences of smoking and the addictiveness of nicotine, believe that smoking can control weight and negative moods, and have a positive image of smokers. In 2000, 29.7 percent of senior girls reported having smoked in the last 30 days.
- ❖ Despite increased knowledge of the adverse health effects of smoking during pregnancy, pregnant women still smoke. Cigarette smoking during pregnancy declined from 19.5% in 1989 to 12.9% in 1998.

### *Smoking Causes Serious Health Effects*

- ❖ Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths among women, and smoking causes 90 percent of lung cancer deaths. Smoking also increases a woman's risk for heart disease, stroke, oropharynx, bladder, pancreas, kidney, liver, colorectal, and cervical cancers, asthma, emphysema and chronic bronchitis, early menopause, and osteoporosis. In fact, for women younger than 50, the majority of coronary heart disease is caused by smoking. Smoking can cause reproductive problems. Smoking can also lead to trouble getting pregnant. Women who smoke during pregnancy risk pregnancy complications, premature birth, low-birth-weight infants, stillbirth, and infant mortality.
- ❖ Exposure to environmental tobacco smoke is a cause of lung cancer and coronary heart disease among women who are lifetime nonsmokers.

### *The Commitment to Quit*

The benefits of not smoking start within days of quitting, and the damage caused by smoking can be often be reversed by quitting smoking completely.

- ❖ The lungs start improving just a few weeks after quitting.
- ❖ You can smell and taste things better 2 days after quitting.
- ❖ The chances of getting heart disease is cut in half one year after quitting. In fact, 15 years after quitting, the chances of getting heart disease are the same as someone who has never smoked.



# National Women's Health Week



May 12, 2003  
National Women's Check-Up Day

- ❖ The risk of lung cancer is cut in half 5 years after quitting.
- ❖ After 5 to 15 years of not smoking, the risk for stroke decreases to that of women who never smoked.
- ❖ Women who want to stop smoking can talk with their health care providers about getting help to quit and, medicines that can help with symptoms of withdrawal..



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Office on Women's Health  
200 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 712E - Washington, DC 20201

National Women's Health Information Center  
[www.4woman.gov](http://www.4woman.gov)  
800-994-WOMAN (9662) - TDD 888-220-5446