



Smoking and Urologic Disease



Overview

Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable deaths in the United States, accounting for approximately 1 in 5 deaths each year. Evidence shows a range of urologic diseases are directly linked with smoking. In fact, smoking is the primary risk factor for bladder cancer, the sixth most common cancer in the United States. Smoking can also cause a host of other irritating, benign urologic problems that can easily be improved or prevented with smoking cessation.

Smoking and Cancer

Carcinogens are agents that damage DNA, causing a series of genetic alterations to occur. Cancer may develop after exposure to carcinogens, even years or decades later. There are over 4,000 chemicals in cigarette smoke, including 43 known carcinogenic compounds and 400 other toxins.

Evidence has shown that smoking can cause transitional cell carcinoma of the bladder. In fact, current smokers are 4 times more likely to develop bladder cancer and former smokers are 2 times more likely to develop the cancer than non-smokers. Smokers with bladder cancer often suffer a higher grade disease and poorer prognosis than non-smokers. Former smokers generally fare better with cancer than current smoker.

Smoking has also been linked with kidney/ renal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma of the penis. Prostate cancer and smoking is less clear, however research has found that smokers have an increased risk of dying from prostate cancer compared to non-smokers.

Smoking and Benign Conditions

Smoking is associated with erectile dysfunction (ED) due to plaque build-up in the arteries and constriction of blood vessels. This results in poor quality erections. Current and former smokers are 30% more likely to suffer with ED.

Infertility may also be linked to smoking due to reduced sperm count and motility. Women smokers trying in-vitro fertilization generally have reduced success.

Smoking can make cause stress incontinence and an overactive bladder symptoms worse. The nicotine can increase bladder contractions. Pelvic floor muscles that support the bladder are generally weaker in smokers, so that leakage may be more of a problem with coughin and sneezing. Smoking can cause chronic coughin and respiratory problems.

Smoking Cessation Strategies

Smoking cessation can be very challenging, but it is one of the best things you can do for your health. You first have decide for yourself that you want to quit. Below are more strategies that can help you quit.

- Write down what you don't like about smoking and why you want to quit. Look at the list when you feel an urge to smoke.
- Tell friends and family that you want to quit smoking and enlist their support.
- Avoid smoking triggers
- Try a smoking cessation medication
- Take it one day at a time
- Replace old behaviors with new routines that aren't associated with smoking.

More aggressive approaches to smoking cessation:

- Medicine
- Aversion therapy
- Behavioral camps
- Hypnosis

For more information visit www.webmd.com