

Smoke Gets In Your Eyes

The Eyecare Trust, is marking No Smoking Day (11 March 2015) by highlighting the damage smoking can do to your sight.

Fewer than 10 per cent of smokers realise smoking can affect their eye health yet the link between smoking and Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) - the UK's leading cause of sight loss - is stronger than the link between smoking and lung cancer [1].

Research published in the British Medical Journal[2] reveals as many as one in five cases of AMD, are caused by tobacco consumption. This equates to around 120,000 cases [3].

As well as having an increased risk of AMD smokers are more likely to suffer other sight-threatening eye conditions such as nuclear cataracts and thyroid eye disease.

Smoking can also leave your eyes feeling permanently dry, sore and irritated whilst chemical poisoning of the optic nerve can impair your colour vision and make everyday activities such as driving potentially hazardous.

However, there is good news for anyone who successfully quits the habit as the increased risks of sight loss associated with smoking begin to reduce over time - a person who stopped smoking 20 years ago will now have the same risk of developing AMD as a non-smoker.

1. *Perceptions of blindness related to smoking*, G Bidwell et al
2. British Medical Journal, Vol. 328, S. 537
3. Calculated using Macular Society AMD prevalence data

Factsheet

The Eyecare Trust is a registered charity that exists to promote awareness of all aspects of eye health. For more information call our public information line on 0845 129 5001 or log on to www.eyecaretrust.org.uk

