

31 MAY 2010: WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY



World Health
Organization

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark, curly hair and large hoop earrings. She is wearing a green strapless top. Around her neck is a medical device, likely a tracheostomy tube, which is a clear plastic collar with a white tube protruding from the front. She is holding a lit cigarette in her right hand, which has a large, ornate ring on the ring finger. The background is a blurred, brightly lit area, possibly a stage or a studio.

Chic? No, throat cancer.

SMOKING
IS UGLY

WWW.WHO.INT/TOBACCO

Protect women from
tobacco marketing and smoke.



**Protect women from
tobacco marketing and smoke.**

World No Tobacco Day 2010.

The theme:

**Gender and tobacco
with an emphasis on
marketing to women.**

The tobacco industry constantly and aggressively seeks new users to replace the ones who quit and the current users – up to half – who will die prematurely from cancer, heart attack, stroke, emphysema or other tobacco-related disease.

Among the industry's many targets of opportunity, women constitute one of the biggest. That's because fewer women than men smoke or chew tobacco. Only about 9% of women smoke, compared with 40% of men. Of the world's over 1 billion smokers, only about 200 million are women.

With women, the industry simply has more room to expand.

While the epidemic of tobacco use among men is in slow decline in some countries, use among women in some countries is increasing.

The future character of the global tobacco epidemic among women can be seen in the habits of girls today. In half of the 151 countries surveyed for trends in smoking among young people, roughly as many girls smoked cigarettes as boys. In some countries, more girls smoked than boys. Teenagers who smoke are likely to become regular smokers in adulthood.

Of the over five million people who die each year from tobacco use, approximately 1.5 million are women. Unless urgent action is taken, tobacco use could kill more than eight million people by 2030, of whom 2.5 million would be women. Approximately three-quarters of these female deaths would occur in the low-income and middle-income countries that are least able to absorb such losses. Every one of these premature deaths would have been avoidable.





In some countries, the bigger threat to women is from exposure to the smoke of others, particularly men. For example, in China, where one-third of the world's adult smokers live, the tobacco epidemic is almost entirely a male phenomenon. Less than 3% of women in China smoke. Yet more than half of Chinese women of reproductive age are regularly exposed to second-hand smoke. Worldwide, of the approximately 430 000 adult deaths caused every year by second-hand smoke, about 64% occur in women.

World No Tobacco Day 2010 focuses on the harm which tobacco marketing and smoke do to women. At the same time, it seeks to make men more aware of their responsibility to avoid smoking around the women with whom they live and work.

Women, and men, must be protected from tobacco industry marketing and smoke, as stated in the preamble to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. In effect since 2005, this international treaty acknowledges “the increase in smoking and other forms of tobacco consumption by women and young girls worldwide” and explicitly recognizes “the need for gender-specific tobacco control strategies”.

Unfortunately, less than 9% of the world’s population is covered by comprehensive advertising bans. Only 5.4% is covered by comprehensive national smoke-free laws.

Controlling the epidemic of tobacco among women is an important part of any tobacco control strategy. As WHO Director-General Margaret Chan has said, “Protecting and promoting the health of women is crucial to health and development – not only for the citizens of today but also for those of future generations”.

Now is the time to act.

Women are at great risk

- Tobacco companies are spending heavily on alluring marketing campaigns that target women.
- Women are gaining spending power and independence. Therefore, they are more able to afford tobacco and feel free to use it.
- Tobacco companies are investing heavily in the low-income and middle-income countries, where most potential new female users live.
- Many countries do not do enough to protect their people from second-hand smoke.
- Many women do not know about the harm done by second-hand smoke, or feel as if they have no right to complain.

The epidemic of tobacco use manifests itself differently among women

- Women's reasons for smoking often differ from men's. The tobacco industry dupes many women into believing that smoking is a sign of liberation, and many women wrongly view smoking as a good way of keeping slim.
- Women who smoke are more likely than those who do not to experience infertility and delays in conceiving. Maternal smoking during pregnancy increases the risks of premature delivery, stillbirth and newborn death and may cause a reduction in breast milk.
- Smoking increases women's risk for cancer of the cervix. There is a possible link between active smoking and premenopausal breast cancer.
- Many tobacco control strategies ignore women who chew tobacco.



Second-hand smoke is particularly worrisome for women

- In many countries, vastly more men smoke than women, and many of those countries fail to protect nonsmokers adequately.
- In many countries, women are powerless to protect themselves, and their children, from second-hand smoke.
- In China – where the vast majority of adult smokers are men – more than half of women of reproductive age are regularly exposed to second-hand smoke, which puts themselves and their unborn babies at risk.

Tobacco industry marketing endangers women

- Advertisements falsely link tobacco use with female beauty, empowerment and health. In fact, addiction to tobacco enslaves and disfigures women.
- Advertisements lure women with such misleading identifiers as “light” or “low-tar”. More women than men smoke “light” cigarettes, often in the mistaken belief that “light” means “safer”.



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Call to action

Protect women from tobacco marketing and smoke

Call to policy-makers

- Implement a comprehensive ban on all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, as called for in the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.
- Implement a comprehensive ban on tobacco smoke in all public places and workplaces, likewise called for in the WHO Framework Convention.
- Heed the call in the preamble of the WHO Framework Convention for “gender-specific tobacco control strategies” and the “full participation of women at all levels of [tobacco control] policy-making and implementation [of tobacco control measures]”.
- Request assistance from WHO to implement the demand-reduction provisions of the WHO Framework Convention through the MPOWER package of tobacco control measures.
- Ensure that government agencies and other stakeholders work together to take into account the different needs of men and women.
- Ensure that tobacco control strategies take into account the special problems of women who chew tobacco.

Call to civil society and nongovernmental organizations

- Advocate for full implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.
- Urge governments to take into account the specific needs of both women and men in the development of tobacco control strategies.
- Share information about the importance of controlling the global tobacco epidemic among women.
- Help to educate women about the tobacco industry's attempts to ensnare them and the dangers of tobacco use.
- Sensitize men to the harm that their second-hand smoke inflicts on the women and children with whom they live and work.

Call to the public

- Demand that your government ban all forms of tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship.
- Demand that your government implement legislation to provide 100% protection from tobacco smoke in all public places and workplaces.
- Campaign for women's freedom from tobacco as a human right.

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**Chic?
No, throat
cancer.**

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Glamour? No, mouth cancer.

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and smoke.

CHEWING
TOBACCO
IS UGLY

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SMOKING
IS UGLY

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Style? No, gangrene.

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**Sex appeal?
No, second-hand
smoke.**

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**Tobacco-free:
it's a woman's
right.**

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The World Health Organization thanks the National Cancer Institute of Brazil (INCA) for its assistance in the development of the materials for World No Tobacco Day 2010, and the victims of the global tobacco epidemic who generously allowed themselves to be photographed in support of the campaign.

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The images of wounds, lesions or ulcerations are real and superimposed on the images of the models.

WHO/NMH/TFI/10.1.

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