Key Messages for Patients and the Public

**Overview**

Tobacco use is the primary preventable cause of disability and death in older adults. Older people who smoke have double the mortality rate compared to those who do not smoke.3

**The Link between Smoking and Older Adults**

- Smoking can lead to a higher risk of cognitive decline and dementia in older adults, and has also been linked with increased risk of macular degeneration, cataracts, hearing changes, and decreased abilities in smell and taste.8
- Older women who smoke have a higher chance of developing age-related diseases such as osteoporosis, breast cancer, and heart disease and are more likely to lose their physical strength compared to older women who do not smoke.9
- Older adults who smoke are more dependent on nicotine than younger people who smoke, and are less likely to believe that smoking harms health.10,11,12
- Older adults who smoke have a higher risk of losing their mobility, independence, and increased risk of fire-related deaths.9
- Older adults who smoke and who quit, even after 65 years of age, significantly improve their health and decrease their chances of disease and death.13
- Older adults who stop smoking benefit from improved lung function, improved safety, quality and length of life, decreased cognitive impairment and decreased risk of dementia and reduced risk of all major causes of death.9
- Older adults who smoke are more likely to be successful at quitting than younger people who smoke.3,11,14

**Helpful Resources**

- The CAMH (Center for Addiction and Mental Health) Nicotine Dependence Service [www.camh.net](http://www.camh.net)
- Smokers' Helpline. Free telephone, web-based or text service offering tips, tools and support to help with quitting smoking. [www.smokershelpline.ca](http://www.smokershelpline.ca) (1 877 513-5333)
References


For additional clinical topics as they relate to tobacco use, please see the CAN-ADAPTT website at: www.can-adapt.net