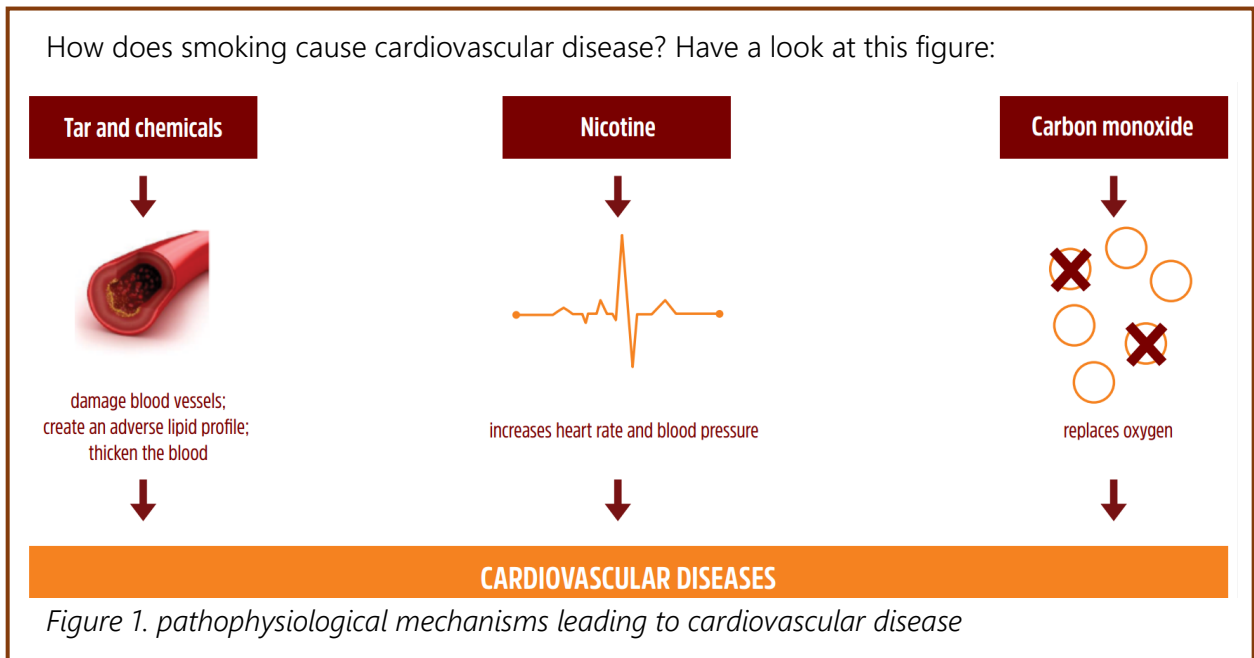


## Misunderstandings on Tobacco use and Cardiovascular Disease

*Fact sheet for the general public*

Tobacco use is a risk factor for (lung) cancer, but not for cardiovascular disease

- ❌ **FALSE:** smoking is the #1 preventable risk factor for cardiovascular diseases, such as heart attack, stroke or peripheral artery disease (arteries of the legs).
- ❌ Using smokeless tobacco is also harmful for your health, it raises your blood pressure and heart rate and may lead to acute cardiac events.



Smoking only one or two cigarettes a day is relatively safe for your health

- ❌ **FALSE:** smoking even one cigarette a day increases the risk for cardiovascular diseases substantially. There is NO safe level of smoking: every cigarette counts!

People who use tobacco do not want to quit

- ❌ **FALSE:** the majority of tobacco users do want to quit. Since nicotine is a highly addictive substance, many tobacco users find it difficult to quit by themselves. It is important to make a quitting plan and find support from your family, friends or healthcare provider.
- ❌ Find out more [here](#) on how you can quit using tobacco or consult your family doctor or medical specialist for information and support to quit



Second-hand smoking is not harmful for your heart and vessels

- ❌ **FALSE:** approximately 603 000 premature deaths worldwide are attributable to second-hand smoke exposure. Most of these deaths are due to coronary heart disease in adults (63%).

Women who smoke have less risk of a heart attack than men who smoke

- ❌ **FALSE:** both men and women who smoke have an increased risk on developing cardiovascular disease. Women even have a slightly higher risk of coronary heart disease than men.
- ❌ About 64% of adult deaths that are attributable to second-hand smoking occur in women.

E-cigarettes are a healthy substitute to tobacco use with minimal to no harm

- ❌ **FALSE:** E-cigarettes, also known as vape pens, e-cigars, or vaping devices, usually contain nicotine and most also contain flavored liquids, which are inhaled by the user. They also emit chemicals that are probably linked to harmful on the heart and vascular system.
- ❌ There is currently no evidence on the long term effect of e-cigarette on health. Based on current knowledge, using e-cigarettes might be less hazardous than continuing to smoke cigarettes. However, smokers who want to quit should use approved cessation medications first.

Smoking low nicotine cigarettes or 'light' cigarettes is less harmful than smoking regular cigarettes

- ❌ **FALSE:** Smoking low-nicotine or 'light' cigarettes impairs your cardiac and vascular function as severely as smoking regular cigarettes.

Smoking during pregnancy does not affect the heart of the unborn baby

- ❌ **FALSE:** smoking during pregnancy influences the heart rate of the unborn baby. The effect is similar to what is seen in adults that smoke and it increases the risk of heart disease.
- ❌ Smoking during pregnancy interferes with the normal development of the baby and increases the risk for an underweight and less healthy baby. It also puts the baby at risk for certain birth defects, such as a fetal heart defect (congenital heart defect).

Quitting smoking does not significantly influence your risk of heart disease

- ❌ **FALSE:** quitting smoking ALWAYS benefits your health, wellbeing and finances, find out more [here](#)

