

Regional Director's message

This year, World No Tobacco Day focuses on “Tobacco and Lung Health”. Our campaign aims to raise awareness of the harmful effects of tobacco use and second-hand exposure to smoke, discourage the use of tobacco in any form, and promote effective policies to reduce tobacco use.

Tobacco threatens our lung health in many ways. It is a major risk factor for respiratory diseases, which are a leading cause of death and suffering among people of all ages, in all the different regions of the world, including our own Eastern Mediterranean Region. Moreover, tobacco smoke contributes to indoor air pollution, which is a major threat to lung health. All the major respiratory diseases are caused by tobacco smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke, but the leading causes of death and disability are lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, tuberculosis and asthma.

In short, tobacco is taking your breath away one way or another. Don't let it. With just one breath, you open yourself up to thousands of toxins from the tobacco smoke which begin damaging your lungs immediately. You become breathless and your lung function is reduced. The same happens with infants, children and adolescents. During pregnancy, second-hand smoke can lead to reduced lung growth and function. Parents who smoke around their children put them at risk of developing chronic respiratory disorders as they grow older. Adolescents who smoke are more likely to develop chronic respiratory disorders and risk permanently damaging their lungs.

The only solution is to stop tobacco from taking your breath away. Tobacco kills one person every four seconds. Do not be that person and do not contribute to the death toll. I say this because tobacco use in the Eastern Mediterranean Region is alarming. In some of our countries, as many as 57% of men and 29% of women smoke. Smoking among young people is particularly worrying, reaching 42% in boys and 31% in girls. This includes smoking shisha, which is more popular among young people than cigarettes. By 2025, smoking is expected to rise in this Region, contrary to the trend in the rest of the world. This will lead to an escalating epidemic of lung disease regionally.

So let us beat tobacco and improve lung health and the overall health and well-being of people in our Region.

As individuals, you can beat tobacco by kicking the habit and not lighting up in the first place.

As governments, you can beat tobacco by implementing the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and adopting the MPOWER measures to reduce the demand for tobacco. That means: creating smoke-free indoor public places; banning tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship; significantly increasing taxes on tobacco products; requiring pictorial health warnings on all tobacco products; providing cessation services to help people quit; and monitoring tobacco use and prevention policies. If you comprehensively implement the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and the MPOWER measures to reduce tobacco use in the Region, you can reduce tobacco use by between 20% to 40% in 5 years, and 56% in 15 years.

As our partners, you can beat tobacco by advocating for the effective enforcement of these policies and helping us engage other stakeholders across different sectors.

We have all made a commitment to reduce tobacco use by 30% by 2025. On this World No Tobacco Day, let us work together to achieve our target, beat tobacco, and stop it from taking our breath away.

Brochure



Posters



[English](#)

**DON'T LET TOBACCO
TAKE YOUR BREATH AWAY**



Smoking more than doubles the risk of developing **tuberculosis** - the world's top infectious killer.

CHOOSE HEALTH NOT TOBACCO
31 MAY WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY #NoTobacco

  

[English](#)



English

[Don't let tobacco take your breath away - Quit now and say no to second-hand smoke](#)

Videos

[Message of Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director, on World No Tobacco Day, 31 May 2019](#)

[World No Tobacco Day 2019: Don't let tobacco take your breath away](#)

[What should take your breath away? Never tobacco – show us what takes your breath away](#)

What should take your breath away? Never tobacco
Social media tiles



[English](#)

 World Health Organization #NoTobacco

**DON'T LET TOBACCO
TAKE YOUR BREATH AWAY**



Tobacco smokers are up to **22 times more likely** to develop **lung cancer** in their lifetime, compared to non-smokers.

[English](#)

World Health Organization #NoTobacco

DON'T LET TOBACCO TAKE YOUR BREATH AWAY



The diagram shows a pair of human lungs with the bronchial tree highlighted in red. To the left of the lungs are three circular icons: a blue circle with a white outline labeled 'normal', a red circle with a white starburst labeled 'asthma', and a red circle with a white starburst and a red outline labeled 'asthma attack'. A white arrow points from the 'asthma' icon to the bronchial tree in the diagram.

Children who breathe **second-hand smoke** are more likely to develop **asthma** and experience frequent and more severe asthma attacks.

[English](#)

World Health Organization #NoTobacco

DON'T LET TOBACCO TAKE YOUR BREATH AWAY



The illustration shows five black silhouettes of people standing in a row. Each person is holding a red cigarette. The third person from the left is shown in a lighter, semi-transparent style, with a red outline of their lungs visible inside their torso, indicating damage.

1 in 5 tobacco smokers will develop **chronic bronchitis** and/or **emphysema** in their lifetime, resulting in agonizing breathing difficulties.

[English](#)

World Health Organization #NoTobacco

**DON'T LET TOBACCO
TAKE YOUR BREATH AWAY**



Tobacco smoking more than **doubles the risk** of developing **tuberculosis** disease and increases the risk of dying from respiratory failure.

[English](#)

World Health Organization #NoTobacco

**DON'T LET TOBACCO
TAKE YOUR BREATH AWAY**

It is never too late to quit.



Within **2 weeks** of **quitting tobacco**, lung function increases. After **10 years**, the risk of lung cancer is half that of a smoker.

[English](#)

Web banner



Rollup

DON'T LET TOBACCO TAKE YOUR BREATH AWAY



CHOOSE HEALTH NOT TOBACCO

31 MAY WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY #NoTobacco



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