Tobacco and heart disease

**Date: 31 May 2018**

Every year, on 31 May, WHO and partners mark World No Tobacco Day (WNTD), highlighting the health and other risks associated with tobacco use, and advocating for effective policies to reduce tobacco consumption.

The focus of World No Tobacco Day 2018 is "Tobacco and heart disease." The campaign will increase awareness on the:

* link between tobacco and heart and other cardiovascular diseases (CVD), including stroke, which combined are the world’s leading causes of death;
* feasible actions and measures that key audiences, including governments and the public, can take to reduce the risks to heart health posed by tobacco.

World No Tobacco Day 2018 coincides with a range of global initiatives and opportunities aimed at addressing the tobacco epidemic and its impact of public health, particularly in causing the death and suffering of millions of people globally. These actions include the WHO-supported Global Hearts and RESOLVE initiatives, which aim to reduce cardiovascular disease deaths and improve care, and the third United Nations General Assembly High-level Meeting on the Prevention and Control of NCDs , being held in 2018.

**How tobacco endangers the heart health of people worldwide**

World No Tobacco Day 2018 will focus on the impact tobacco has on the cardiovascular health of people worldwide.

Tobacco use is an important risk factor for the development of coronary heart disease, stroke, and peripheral vascular disease.

Despite the known harms of tobacco to heart health, and the availability of solutions to reduce related death and disease, knowledge among large sections of the public that tobacco is one of the leading causes of CVD is low.

**Facts about tobacco, heart and other cardiovascular diseases**

Cardiovascular diseases (CVD) kill more people than any other cause of death worldwide, and tobacco use and second-hand smoke exposure contribute to approximately 17% of all heart disease deaths. Tobacco use is the second leading cause of CVD, after high blood pressure.

The global tobacco epidemic kills more than 7 million people each year, of which close to 900 000 are non-smokers dying from breathing second-hand smoke. Nearly 80% of the more than 1 billion smokers worldwide live in low- and middle-income countries, where the burden of tobacco-related illness and death is heaviest.

The WHO MPOWER measures are in line with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) and can be used by governments to reduce tobacco use and protect people from NCDs. These measures include:

* Monitor tobacco use and prevention policies;
* Protect people from exposure to tobacco smoke by creating completely smoke-free indoor public places, workplaces and public transport;
* Offer help to quit tobacco (cost-covered, population-wide support, including brief advice by health care providers and national toll-free quit lines);
* Warn about the dangers of tobacco by implementing plain/standardized packaging, and/or large graphic health warnings on all tobacco packages, and implementing effective anti-tobacco mass media campaigns that inform the public about the harms tobacco use and second-hand smoke exposure.
* Enforce comprehensive bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship; and
* Raise taxes on tobacco products and make them less affordable.

**Goals of the World No Tobacco Day 2018 campaign**

World No Tobacco Day 2018 aims to:

* Highlight the links between the use of tobacco products and heart and other cardiovascular diseases.
* Increase awareness within the broader public of the impact tobacco use and exposure to second-hand smoke have on cardiovascular health.
* Provide opportunities for the public, governments and others to make commitments to promote heart health by protecting people from use of tobacco products.
* Encourage countries to strengthen implementation of the proven MPOWER tobacco control measures contained in the WHO FCTC.