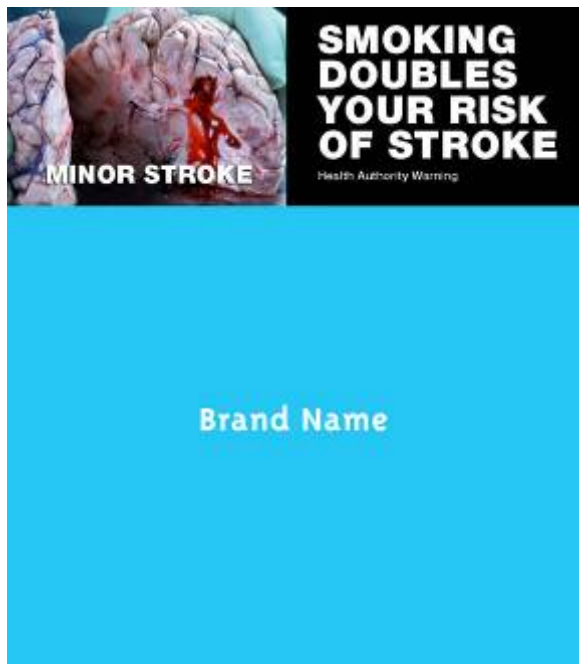


## SMOKING DOUBLES YOUR RISK OF STROKE



**Front of Cigarette Pack  
(representation only)**



**Back of Cigarette Pack  
(representation only)**

Smoking is a major cause of strokes.<sup>1,2</sup> Smokers are four times more likely to have a stroke compared with non-smokers.<sup>3</sup> This risk is particularly elevated in younger people.<sup>2</sup> Non-smokers living with smokers are also more likely to suffer a stroke.<sup>3</sup>

A stroke occurs when a blood vessel that supplies blood to the brain suddenly becomes blocked (ischaemic stroke) or bleeds (haemorrhagic stroke).<sup>4</sup> This results in part of the brain dying and causes loss of function of that part of the brain. A stroke may lead to death or affect functions such as movement of body parts, vision, swallowing and communication.<sup>4,5</sup>

Ischaemic strokes are generally as a result of atherosclerosis in the carotid arteries and their branches.<sup>6</sup> Atherosclerosis occurs when there is a narrowing and clogging of the arteries which reduces blood supply, and the amount of oxygen available, throughout the body.<sup>7</sup> Smoking cigarettes is known to contribute to the development of atherosclerosis. The more cigarettes you smoke the greater the development of carotid artery atherosclerosis<sup>8</sup> and the higher the risk of having a stroke<sup>9</sup>.

Some people experience a transient ischaemic attack (TIA) before a stroke. TIA's are sometimes called 'mini-strokes' and are important predictors of stroke.<sup>4,5</sup> A TIA produces temporary stroke-like symptoms that leaves no residual signs. One in three people who have had a TIA will go on to have a stroke and another one in three will have repeated TIAs.<sup>4,5</sup>

Stroke is the second largest single cause of death in Australia. In 2004, 12,041 people died (9.1% of all deaths) as a result of stroke.<sup>10</sup> There are approximately 40,000 – 48,000 stroke events among Australians each year<sup>4,5</sup> and approximately a third of people will die within a year of having a stroke.<sup>5,11</sup>

In 2003 there were approximately 346,700 Australians who had suffered a stroke at some time. Of these, 282,600 had a disability.<sup>4</sup>

Your risk of stroke decreases after quitting. Between five and 15 years after quitting your risk of having a stroke is the same as a non-smoker.<sup>7</sup>

Also see the fact sheet *Smoking clogs your arteries* for more information on atherosclerosis.

Decided to quit? For help, talk to your doctor or pharmacist, call the Quitline on 131 848 or visit the Quitline web site at [www.quitnow.info.au](http://www.quitnow.info.au).

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