



University: University of Pécs
Country: Hungary

SDG3: GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING

3,3 Collaborations and health services

3.3.6. Smoke-free policy

Have a 'smoke-free' policy:

- Smoking-free campus
- Smoking in designated areas

Smoke-Free Policy at the University of Pécs – Legal Summary

Legal Background

1. Act XLII of 1999 on the Protection of Non-Smokers

- This Act applies to all public education, higher education, and healthcare institutions and stipulates that smoking is prohibited:
 - in enclosed public spaces,
 - on the premises of public institutions and within 5 meters of their entrances,
 - throughout the entire territory of educational and healthcare institutions, including courtyards.
- Only specifically designated open-air smoking areas may be established, and only if permitted by law (e.g. not within educational or patient care zones).
- The employer and the head of the institution are responsible for enforcing the ban, displaying the required signage, and handling any violations.

2. Government Decree No. 210/2009 (IX. 29.)

- This decree details the rules for designating and supervising smoking areas:
- Designated smoking areas must be:
 - separated, well-ventilated, and clearly marked;
 - not located in enclosed communal spaces (indoor smoking is strictly prohibited).
- The designation of smoking areas must be documented in writing.
- The decree also requires the use of “No Smoking” and “Smoking Area” signs with the appropriate pictograms.
- Compliance is monitored by the National Public Health Center (NNK) and occupational safety authorities.

3. The University of Pécs Organizational and Operational Rules (SZMSZ) and Internal Regulations

- The University of Pécs Organizational and Operational Rules (SZMSZ) and the Directive No. 1/2012 of the Director General of the Clinical Centre allow smoking only in designated smoking areas.
- Within the University of Pécs, all educational, research, student, and healthcare buildings are considered completely smoke-free areas.
- Faculties, dormitories, and clinics specify the exact locations of designated smoking areas in their internal regulations.



- The University's occupational safety and security services are responsible for enforcing the policy and checking the placement of signs.

Summary – Main Points of the Smoke-Free Policy at the University of Pécs

Area / Aspect	Regulation	Legal Basis
Enclosed areas (buildings, classrooms, laboratories)	Smoking completely prohibited	Act XLII of 1999, §2
Open areas (courtyards, parks, campuses)	Smoking allowed only in designated areas	Act XLII of 1999 + Gov. Decree 210/2009
Designated smoking area	Only outdoors, clearly marked and separated	Gov. Decree 210/2009
Entrances, windows (within 5 m)	Smoking prohibited	Act XLII of 1999, §2 (3)
E-cigarettes and heated tobacco products	Prohibited in the same way as conventional tobacco products	Amendment to Act XLII of 1999 (2016)
Supervision / enforcement	Institution management, occupational safety officers, security service	Gov. Decree 210/2009
Sanctions	Warning, disciplinary action, administrative fine	Act XLII of 1999, §§6–7

Practical Application at the University of Pécs

- The entire territory of the university is fundamentally smoke-free.
- Smoking is only permitted in designated outdoor areas (identified separately by each faculty and clinic).
- All educational, research, healthcare, and student community buildings are 100% smoke-free.
- The policy also covers e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products.
- Both prohibited and permitted zones must be clearly marked with signage.
- The University (as employer) is responsible for ensuring compliance and taking action in case of violations.

Sources

1. Act XLII of 1999 on the Protection of Non-Smokers
2. Government Decree No. 210/2009 (IX. 29.) on the Designation of Smoking Areas
3. University of Pécs Organizational and Operational Rules (SZMSZ) and Clinical Centre Directive No. 1/2012

Posts in connection with smoking

- Smoking and the corona virus (COVID-19)



"...The risk of getting infected can decrease by quitting..."

The new corona virus, which spreads by droplet infection, through getting into contact with infected saliva, causes severe respiratory infection in the vulnerable. Besides known risk factors such as age above 65 years and the existence of chronic diseases, several studies have been investigating the impact of smoking. Most of these studies have revealed that smoking may have a negative impact on the course of disease when contracting COVID-19, and lighting and smoking a cigarette has been shown to play a role in transmitting the virus from hand to mouth.

Why can this virus be more dangerous for smokers?

Several factors may be in the background. Inhalation of cigarette smoke damages the airways, and the lungs, triggering inflammatory processes. Cigarette smoke inhibits proper functioning of ciliary epithelial cells in the airways, thereby, it hinders the clearing of airways and impairs protective mechanisms. Consequently, lung capacity decreases and due to carbon-monoxide the oxygenation of tissues and organs is also reduced. A damaged lung is more susceptible to infections.

Smoking impairs the immune system as well, thus it has an effect on how adequately the body is able to respond to infections: smokers are more vulnerable to infections and may develop more severe symptoms when getting infected.

Smokers are more likely to develop chronic pulmonary disease (e.g. COPD), cardiovascular diseases (e.g. hypertension), diabetes and cancers that all impose a greater risk when infected with the new corona virus.

How can we reduce the risk of getting infected in the case of smokers?

General rules apply even more strictly to smokers (keeping hygiene rules, staying at home, social distancing) and may help prevent getting infected.

When smoking, it is of vital importance to keep social distancing and to avoid smoking in the company of others. The same applies to those smoking waterpipes.

The situation caused by the pandemic has caused many changes in our daily lives and thus has resulted in a lot of stress for most of us: our work environment and daily routine have changed, many of us have lost their workplaces, we have been increasingly worried about our loved ones, about our own health and future. Increasing the amount of cigarettes we go through a day in an attempt to try to fight stress is the worst possible solution, thus smokers should consciously try to avoid it and choose other stress release strategies instead



(e.g. physical exercise , relaxation, taking up an old hobby again.). It is important to pay increased attention to our loved ones and those around us as isolation or spending more time together during lockdown may increase exposure to passive smoking as well, therefore, those that share a household with a smoker may be at increased risk.

What can smokers do to protect their health? If the time is right and a smoker decides to devote the time and energy quitting smoking is still the best option. The longer the time since the last cigarette the more the benefits a smoker will start to experience. Quitting is not easy, many only succeed after several attempts. The process however, can be more successful and much easier and with a supporting environment. Bans introduced due to the pandemic and changes in our everyday environment have posed tremendous challenges upon all of us but creativity, reconsidering priorities and a conscious attention to our mental health can help us cope with the situation more easily. The current situation could eventually prove beneficial if we consciously start to avoid situations that would urge us to light up or if we find and establish new habits that do not involve smoking.

Why is it advisable to try to quit smoking now amidst the pandemic?

Quitting smoking is always a highly advisable thing to do. Now, during the corona virus pandemic it is even more important:

- The risk of getting infected can be significantly reduced by quitting smoking as the repeated movement, the fingers holding the cigarette touching the mouth, is cut off.
- After quitting, a former smoker is more likely to fight against the infection more competently as oxygen levels normalise quite soon after smoking the last cigarette, the clearing of the airways starts and lungs start to regenerate. Quitting smoking has positive effects on the cardiovascular system as well which become more and more pronounced as time passes. These positive changes can help people recover and fight the infection better.

Where can we find more information and further details?

During the pandemic, information in connection with quitting smoking is available via the internet, phone or through a mobile application, individual or group counselling in person is currently not available.

Telephone counselling for quitting smoking is provided by trained experts. This programme is available free of charge from everywhere in Hungary for those willing to quit. The counselling service takes 6 weeks according to a prearranged schedule. If interested, contact: 06-80-44-20-44 .

The mobile application called: „*Gond? Egy szál se*” designed to facilitate quitting smoking can also provide useful advice for potential quitters.

- Support and Help in Consideration of Smoking Cessation



The following facts demonstrate the often times murky, indistinct risks associated with tobacco use.

Today in Hungary, tobacco use is not ideally handled effectively and it is typically an underestimated phenomenon. Regarding most individuals, it is usually not overly obvious why it is important to step up against the use of tobacco products. The following facts demonstrate the often times murky, indistinct risks associated with tobacco use:

- Nicotine consumed by tobacco use can quickly establish a very strong addiction, which is why it is so hard to quit. It is a much stronger addiction than when compared with alcohol, cocaine, heroin or caffeine.
- One third of the adult population of the world uses some form of tobacco.
- In Hungary, every fifth death is directly the result of tobacco use. In general, the individuals lived 21 years less than when compared with those individuals who do not use any form of tobacco.
- In Hungary, 36% of the total population reportedly uses some form of tobacco, of which, the most common form is smoking. This represents 150% of the EU average.
- 75% of today's smokers began smoking at the age of 18 or younger.
- There are 4000 chemicals in cigarette smoke, out of which, 43 was proven to be carcinogenic.
- Smokers are far more susceptible to other forms of illness and disease (various types of cancer, vascular diseases and oral diseases)
- With supporting smoking cessation, smokers get a real chance to get rid of their addiction.

Why is it important to ask for help?

Many individuals reportedly experience trying a plethora of methods to quit smoking, but only very few of those are genuinely effective. Only 2-4 % among those individuals who stop smoking without support can actually quit smoking after one year.

Can you tell me about the counseling supporting smoking cessation?

The goal regarding this aspect of counseling is not to make individuals quit smoking, but to offer support in the process.

- It is Still Good to Quit Smoking, Despite the Potential for Weight-gain



Researchers followed more than 170,000 cases including both male and females, at an average of a twenty year span, monitoring the connections between smoking cessation, weight-gain, Type 2 diabetes, and mortality.

Smoking cessation undoubtedly reduces the risk of cardiovascular diseases including mortality even if there is significant potential for weight-gain, as depicted in a recent article attributed to researchers at Harvard University, which was published in The New England Journal of Medicine. In the study, the researchers followed more than 170,000 cases including both male and females, at an average of a twenty year span, monitoring the connections between smoking cessation, weight-gain, Type 2 diabetes, and mortality.

Based on the research, the risk of Type 2 diabetes was temporarily higher among those individuals who quit smoking than when compared among the smokers: the temporary growth was proportionate with the level of weight-gain, and the risk did not increase among individuals whose weight did not undergo significant change following cessation. However, the overall data has shown weight-gain developed following smoking cessation, yet has not aggravated the benefits regarding the decreased rate of mortality caused by cardiovascular diseases and lengthening life expectancy. It is worth bearing in mind in consideration of those individuals who desire to quit smoking that extreme gain-weight can be prevented by healthy menu options and increased physical activity. The medical benefits can be maximized even moreso by reducing the short term risk of diabetes and mitigating mortality risk.

- Does Smoking Cessation Offer You a Sense of Fulfillment?



Individuals who managed to quit smoking are not only healthier, but also happier, in particular, in the long run, which a recent American study shows.

It is considerably well-proven that in regards to smoking cessation, one's state of health improves, and a smoke-free environment in fact, saves lives.

Cessation is Not Only About Giving Up

A large number of smokers think that giving up smoking has changed the quality of their life profoundly, and they say the change was not entirely positive.

However, life without smoking is not strictly about bitter sacrifices and deprivation. Those individuals who quit smoking are usually far more satisfied with themselves and their lives, and also they are much healthier. Researchers (led by Megan Piper) of University of Wisconsin, recently stated.

The experts asked former smokers the types of change they underwent following successful cessation, following one year and three years, tobacco-free. Interestingly, 1504 men and women who wanted to quit smoking participated in the entire span of the study. In addition to the general quality of life, there were questions regarding the current state of health and potentially emerging negative sensations.

An Obvious Positive Turn

The authors of the study report experiences in which regarding its opposition to smokers, the successful quitters' general quality of life definitely improved following the cessation program. Additionally, they were indeed, much healthier and were more positive regarding their outlook on life.

In summary, this is generally experienced following one year after the cessation program, yet, researchers found the same regarding the group representing three years following the cessation of tobacco product. The participants reported since becoming smoke-free, they are less affected by stress, even if their work and family environment has stayed the same.

„A lot of people think that giving up smoking means a very unpleasant deprivation, that can only affect their life quality negatively. But the results of the research clearly show that the ones who have quit smoking are much happier than the ones who smoke” – highlighted the experts.