

The devastating effects of smoking: Graphic TV adverts feature ex-smokers who developed cancer

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Hard-hitting new TV adverts show the devastating effects of smoking.

Two ex-smokers are seen appealing to the public to quit the habit in a graphic new campaign supported by Cancer Research UK.

Maggie Bratton, from Newcastle, was diagnosed with mouth cancer at just 45, which led to her undergoing a grueling operation to remove her palate.

The mother-of-two is now forced to wear a piece of plastic in the roof of her mouth every day just to be able to eat and speak.

Father Tony Osborne, who was diagnosed with cancer of the voicebox on his 52nd birthday, also features.



Maggie Bratton's life was turned upside down when she was diagnosed with mouth cancer at just 45. She had to have surgery to remove her palate

Mr Osborne, from South Bank, Middlesbrough, had to relearn how to speak and even breathe through a hole in his chest and an artificial voicebox after surgeons removed the inside of his neck.

He now even has to be supervised in the shower in case water enters his lungs via the hole in his chest and drowns him.

The campaign was put together by Fresh - the UK's first dedicated regional tobacco control programme, which is based in the North East.

Fresh's director, Ailsa Rutter OBE, said: 'Tony and Maggie are two incredibly brave people who want their experiences of smoking to be heard.'

'They don't want other people to have to go through the pain and the life-limiting surgery they went through at a relatively young age.'

'Tony and Maggie's stories do not make comfortable viewing, but campaigns are one of the most powerful ways to encourage people to stop and young people not to start in the first place.'

'In all our research with smokers, we know that hard hitting campaigns like this are extremely impactful to trigger quit attempts.'

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Smoking is responsible for 14.7 per cent of new cancer cases - 44,100 - and 27 per cent of all cancer deaths - 36,600 - in England every year.

Overall the habit causes 77,900 deaths annually in England from cancer and other diseases, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, heart disease and stroke.

'Although most smokers have heard of lung cancer, smoking causes 16 types of cancer, as well as heart disease, COPD, stroke, dementia and diabetes,' Ms Rutter said.

'Every clinician, GP and nurse is in a unique position to help stop more people like Maggie and Tony being diagnosed in the future.'

'SMOKING ISN'T WORTH WHAT I HAVE GONE THROUGH': MOTHER-OF-TWO HAD HER PALATE REMOVED AFTER DEVELOPING MOUTH CANCER AT JUST 45

A mother-of-two's life was turned upside down when she was diagnosed with mouth cancer at just 45.

Maggie Bratton, now 62, started smoking at just 15 and only stopped the night before she underwent surgery to remove the roof of her mouth.

Ms Bratton, who has one grandchild, is now forced to wear a plastic prosthesis that acts as a palate every day just to be able to eat and speak.

'I've got it with me for the rest of my life but at least I am alive,' she said.

'I have to live every day knowing it might have been prevented if I'd not smoked.

'Smoking isn't worth what I have gone through.'

Speaking of when she started smoking, Ms Bratton said: 'I used to buy one cigarette at the shop on the way to school that type of thing.

'A lot of people smoked then and it was probably down to peer pressure.

'The risks of smoking weren't as widely known then.

'There wasn't the literature or advice back then either, so I never thought about how smoking could impact my health.'

Ms Bratton first realised something was wrong when she developed an abscess on her gums.

'I was given two lots of antibiotics and it didn't go away, so the doctor sent me to the General Hospital but not for one second did I think it would turn out to be what it was,' she said.

Despite having to undergo a biopsy and have several teeth removed, cancer still never crossed Ms Bratton's mind.

'The day I was told I had mouth cancer I was shocked,' she said.

'I had never even heard of mouth cancer and I was diagnosed.

'I remember when I first got home and I just thought, "how do I tell my kids?"

'I was only 45-years-old and they didn't want anything to happen to me.

'I wanted to be around to see them grow up.'

Ms Bratton was forced to have the top of her mouth removed, as well as to have skin taken from her leg to create a new lining for her mouth.

The day before her surgery, Ms Bratton threatened to leave the hospital because she felt unable to give up cigarettes.

'[The nurse] told me to sleep on it and to think of my kids and I haven't smoked since,' she said.

A year after the operation, she still had no feeling down one side of her mouth.

'I still get upset when I talk about having cancer and living with its effects,' she said.

'It's not an experience I would wish on anyone.

'If I had one message to smokers it'd be don't wait until it's too late.'

Mr Osbourne's surgeon Mr Shane Lester, from The James Cook University Hospital in Middlesbrough, said: 'A smoker's risk of having laryngeal cancer is much higher than if you had never smoked at all.'

'If you haven't got cancer then stopping smoking can help prevent you getting cancer.'

'For cancer patients, the chances of successful treatment are much better with stopping smoking.'

He adds head and neck cancers can have a big impact on a sufferer's appearance by changing how their face moves.

The disease can also alter how they eat or speak.

'Even patients who get through everything and are out of surveillance still have to live with those side effects,' Mr Lester added.

'Sometimes people blame themselves, but lots of people who smoke started when they were kids, when the risks of smoking weren't known and they got addicted.'

'It's far more healthy to look forward, to get help to stop smoking, and look forward to the health benefits of that.'

'DON'T LET SMOKING RUIN YOUR LIFE': FATHER IS FORCED TO BREATHE THROUGH A HOLE IN HIS CHEST AFTER BATTLING THROAT CANCER AGED 52

A former smoker is forced to breathe through a hole in his chest and speak via an artificial voice box after battling throat cancer.

Tony Osborne was diagnosed with the disease on his 52nd birthday.

After undergoing a full neck dissection, Mr Osborne, now 55, struggles to eat and even has to be supervised in the shower in case water enters his lungs via the hole in his chest and drowns him.

Mr Osborne has to live with the impact of his former habit, which he kept up even after he watching the disease kill his father and brother.

He is speaking out to encourage people to quit, saying: 'Don't let smoking ruin your life.'



Tony Osborne is forced to breathe through a hole in his chest and speak via an artificial voice box after battling throat cancer. He was diagnosed on his 52nd birthday

Speaking of his diagnosis, Mr Osborne said: 'I was stunned.

'I knew about lung cancer but I had no idea what was happening to my throat.

'I immediately knew it was the cigarettes. I knew what had caused it, so I thought "why did I do it?"

His doctor told Mr Osborne his only hope of surviving was to have his voicebox removed straight away.

Surgery was also required to separate his airway from his mouth, nose and oesophagus, as well as a full neck dissection being necessary.

'I was in hospital for nearly three weeks but was determined to get better,' Mr Osborne said.

'When you first come round from the operation you have pipes coming out of you and are laid up in the bed.

'I couldn't drink any water for the first week in case it leaked into my lungs – you can't imagine how tough that is.'

Once recovered from the surgery, Mr Osborne was forced to adapt to his new way of life.

'My nose doesn't do anything anymore, I don't breathe through it and I have no sense of smell,' he said.

'I had to learn how to talk again as I now have to press down on the valve on my neck and in order to talk I have to stop breathing.

'Eating takes me a lot longer than the average person because I've had so many nerves removed that I can't move my tongue in the same way I used to.

'Before I had this I'd run up the stairs but I can no longer do normal things like this or walking distances.

'I have to be supervised when I take shower or bath as if I get water in my stoma – opening in my neck – it will go straight into my lungs and I'll drown.'

Mr Osborne, who provides support to others going through procedures similar to his own, is urging smokers to quit and avoid what he has been through.

Professor Linda Bauld, Cancer Research UK's prevention expert, said: 'Campaigns like these play a key role in reminding smokers why it is important to quit sooner rather than later.

'Smoking is still the single biggest avoidable cause of cancer in the world.

'It causes over a quarter of cancer deaths in the UK and three in 20 cancer cases.

'There are more than 70 chemicals in tobacco smoke that have been found to cause cancer, and whether you smoke cigarettes or roll ups, the risks are the same.

'Stopping smoking can greatly reduce the risk of smoking-related cancers, compared to continuing to smoke and the earlier you stop the better.'

Professor Bauld urges smokers to get help with quitting via the medication and support available from free local stop smoking services.

E-cigarettes could be another option, she added.

Dr Tony Branson, clinical lead for the Northern Cancer Alliance, said: 'Every cigarette pumps harmful chemicals into the lungs, and around the body.

'Many of these are known to damage DNA, stick to cells, harm cell repair and cause cancer.

'Although treatment for many cancers has improved enormously, many patients find it hard to speak clearly, swallow, eat or function normally again.

'Quitting smoking is the best thing you can do for your health and it is crucial to stop for good as soon as possible.'

Data suggests national smoking rates could fall by a third by 2023, which would mean only around one in 10 adults smoke.

Besides lung cancer, the habit also causes cancers of the:

- Mouth
- Nasal cavities
- Pharynx and larynx
- Stomach
- Kidney
- Bowel
- Liver
- Pancreas
- Cervix
- Bladder
- Ovaries
- Oesophagus

- Ureter

Smoking can also lead to myeloid leukaemia, which affects the blood and bone marrow, and has been linked to breast cancer.