



# Dubai Celebrates ‘World No Tobacco Day’

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Last week, Dubai celebrated “World No Tobacco Day”, an annual event that takes place around the world on the 31<sup>st</sup> May each year. Its aim is to raise awareness about the health threats posed by cigarette smoking and to encourage people to give up the habit. This year’s theme focused on the relationship between tobacco and lung health, with a specific focus on how the former damages the latter.

As ever, the United Arab Emirates was keen to play its part and there were a number of initiatives and incentives taking place in cities around the country. In Dubai, several hospitals provided free nicotine tests to quantify the concentration of this addictive substance in the body. Meanwhile, the “Break the Smoke” campaign will travel around corporate offices in June and encourage businessmen to give up the habit.

## A deadly addiction

According to the World Health Organisation, over seven million people die as a direct result of tobacco smoke each year. While the majority of these are smokers, as many as 890,000 die from second-hand inhalation. It’s also thought that tobacco smoke inhalation accounts for up to 90% of lung cancer diagnoses worldwide. Given that the UAE discovers at least 150 new cases of lung cancer per year, tobacco is clearly a huge problem at home and abroad.

The long-term benefits of kicking the habit are clear for all to see, but it makes sense to quit smoking in the short-term as well. Some of the more immediate effects of smoke inhalation include shortness of breath, stained teeth and fingers, [the effect of cravings on sensory perception](#) and, of course, a huge and unnecessary financial expense. For all these reasons and more, it makes sense to capitalise on the groundwork laid on “World No Tobacco Day” and carry those good habits forward.

## Making a difference

Each year, the event aims to raise awareness of issues closely related to tobacco consumption and how it affects the human body. This year, the campaign concentrated on:

- The risks of passive inhalation by non-smokers
- The specific detrimental impacts of smoking on lungs



- The sheer scale of deadly and damaging conditions caused by tobacco consumption
- The mounting body of evidence linking tobacco to tuberculosis
- The importance of robust lung health to a happy life
- The concrete actions and measures that both individuals and governments can take to limit their risk

In Dubai, a month-long initiative entitled “Break the Smoke” hopes to hammer home those points for countless office workers and businessmen across the city. Instigated by Dr Mansoor Anwar Habib, the initiative will feature 10 information sessions of 45 minutes each at various places of work across Dubai, educating smokers on the damage they are wreaking on their lungs. At the same time, Burjeel and Medeor Hospitals will offer people free nicotine tests to allow them to quantify the level of the drug in their body and hopefully spur themselves into action. The incentive will run throughout June.