

Graphic Health Warnings for Cigarettes: What You Need to Know

This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in partnership with the Food and Drug Administration. , CDC – safer, healthier people.

The Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act was signed by President Barack Obama on June 22, 2009 to help reduce the toll of death and disease from tobacco use. In compliance with this act, the FDA issued a proposed rule on November 10, 2010 that requires new graphic health warnings for cigarette packages and advertisements.

For cigarette packages, the rule requires that graphic health warnings cover at least one half of the package, including the top front and back of each package. The rule also requires that graphic warnings appear in each cigarette advertisement and occupy at least 20 percent of the ad. The proposed rule includes nine new textual warning statements and 36 proposed images designed to help the public better understand the negative health consequences of smoking.

The FDA is seeking public comments on the proposed rule through January 9, 2011. They will consider all comments, the latest scientific literature, and other research before selecting nine of the 36 images with warning statements. They will issue the final regulations about these graphic warning labels in June 2011.

The warnings will display facts such as:

- cigarettes are addictive,
- tobacco smoke can harm your children,
- cigarettes cause fatal lung disease,
- smoking during pregnancy can harm your baby, and
- quitting smoking now greatly reduces serious risks to your health.

These and four other messages will also be accompanied by color graphics showing the negative health consequences of smoking. Nine different warning labels will appear on cigarette packages and advertisements on a rotating basis.

After the regulations are finalized, all cigarette packages and advertisements will have to include these graphic warning labels starting September 2012. In addition, tobacco manufacturers cannot distribute for sale packages of cigarettes without these labels after October 2012.

Do your part to reduce the negative health consequences of tobacco use. Get help to quit and discourage others, especially youth, from starting.

To learn more about the proposed warnings for cigarette packages and advertisements and to submit comments, visit www.fda.gov/cigarettewarnings.

There will be additional podcasts that provide more detail about the new federal tobacco regulations. Subscribe to this series or check back often for updates.

For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.