Countdown to smoke-free grounds

Dr Carol Davidson
Director of Public Health

Smoking continues to be the biggest single preventable cause of ill health and early death in our community. Approximately 1,000 people in Ayrshire die prematurely each year from the effects of smoking. Lung cancer, chronic obstructive lung disease and coronary heart disease are the three diseases most commonly associated with smoking. UK-wide, smoking accounts for one fifth of all deaths each year.

But it’s not only smokers who are at risk. There are no safe levels of exposure to second-hand smoke. Because you cannot see 85 per cent of second-hand smoke, you can breathe in harmful, invisible particles and gases without knowing it. It’s therefore even more important for us, as the health service in Ayrshire and Arran, to take action to ensure that when our patients, staff and visitors come into our grounds they do so within a safe and pleasant environment.

Exposure to second-hand smoke increases the risk of lung cancer and heart disease in the long term. Short-term exposure to second-hand smoke irritates the eyes but is also associated with bronchitis, pneumonia, asthma attacks, middle ear infections, sudden infant death syndrome and possible cardiovascular impairment in children.

Ends

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