

World No Tobacco Day

Campaign Focuses Attention on Product Packaging

by Mary Tooms

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), over five million people worldwide die every year from the detrimental effects of tobacco. To put that into perspective, that is more people than die from HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. Approximately 1,200 Americans die per day from tobacco-related disease, making it the leading cause of preventable death in this country. In the United States, 18.3 percent of adults are current smokers (BRFSS, 2008). In Kentucky, 25.2 percent of adults are current smokers, which is clearly well above the national average.



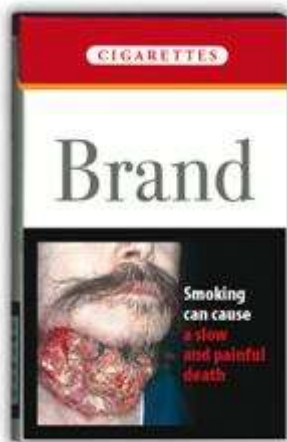
World No Tobacco Day was created in 1987 by the WHO, in order to draw attention to both the global tobacco epidemic as well as to highlight the health risks involved with its use. A resolution was passed making May 31 of every year World No Tobacco Day.

While most people are aware that smoking is unhealthy, many are unaware of exactly how harmful tobacco products are. Many know that smoking is bad for their health, but do not fully understand the specific consequences of the addiction. Events like World No Tobacco Day attempt to make the consequences of smoking clear. This year, the theme of World No Tobacco Day was "Tobacco Health Warnings." Many countries now require that tobacco product packaging graphically display the dangers of tobacco use. It has been shown that health warnings in the form of pictures are an effective motivator to quit for those individuals who are not yet addicted to nicotine, as they reduce the appeal of tobacco products for users.

While the U.S. has not been one of the countries requiring such warnings, the passage of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act by Congress earlier this year will change that. The Act grants the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) the authority to regulate the manufacturing, marketing and sale of tobacco products. With its passage, the FDA will also soon require larger and more specific health warnings on tobacco product packaging. These warnings must cover 50 percent of the product package on both the front and the back. In addition, two years after the legislation's enactment, the FDA may require companies to use graphic health warnings already used in countries such as Belgium, Brazil, and Egypt.

Included below are some of the images used in other countries:

Belgium



Brazil



China



Egypt



Throughout 2009, WHO will continue to encourage governments around the world to require tobacco health warnings like those above, that cover half the package of cigarettes, cover both the front and the back of the package, and that include pictures.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that by 2030, tobacco use may cause more than eight million deaths worldwide each year. The World No Tobacco Day campaign helps draw much needed attention to the true impact of the worldwide tobacco epidemic.

For more information please visit the [World No Tobacco Day Campaign Web site](#).

About the Author

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