

Grim photos proposed for cigarette packs

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Health officials in New Zealand propose putting gruesome photos of health effects on cigarette packs to discourage people from smoking.

Associate Health Minister Damien O'Connor released a Ministry of Health document Tuesday proposing to adorn cigarette packages with pictures of diseased lungs and gangrenous limbs, to help persuade 30,000 to 60,000 New Zealanders to quit smoking, the New Zealand Herald reported.

The document indicates no decision has been made yet on adopting the technique, which O'Connor called "truth in labeling."

"The facts are overwhelming that smoking cigarettes kills people and we have a responsibility as a government to try and reduce that harm," said O'Connor. "The messages are rather blunt. The pictorial warnings are rather graphic, they are horrible, but so too are the results of too many people who take up smoking."

Several countries -- including Australia, Brazil, Canada and Thailand -- use photo warnings on cigarette packs. O'Connor said photo warnings in Canada contributed to a drop in that country's smoking rate -- from 22 percent to 20 percent.

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