

Smoking and Ways to Quit

Know why you want to quit.

When you quit smoking, your body gets to work repairing damaged tissues. Here are some of the health benefits:

- You stop damage to your lungs.
- You improve the blood flow to your heart, brain, and other body organs.
- You can fight colds and other respiratory infections more easily.
- You lower your risk of cancer, heart disease, stroke, and circulation problems.
- You will protect your family and friends from the dangers of your secondhand smoke.

In addition, when you quit you will:

- Feel more in control of your life.
- Have better smelling hair, breath, clothes, home, and car.
- Stop the premature wrinkles smoking causes on your face.
- Have more stamina for activities.
- Save money.

Smoking is an addictive habit. Most former smokers make several attempts to quit before they finally succeed. So, never say, "I can't." Just keep trying.

Set a quit date.

Set a date for when you will stop smoking. Don't buy cigarettes to carry you beyond the last day before your quit day. Tell your family and friends you plan to quit, and ask for their support and encouragement. Ask them not to offer you cigarettes and ask them not to smoke around you. (This may help them quit, too.)

Make a plan.

5 Days Before Your Quit Date

- Think about your reasons for quitting.
- Tell your friends and family you are planning to quit.
- Stop buying cigarettes.
- Start to think of yourself as a nonsmoker and sit in the no smoking section.

4 Days Before Your Quit Date

- Pay attention to when and why you smoke.
- Think of other things to hold in your hand instead of a cigarette.
- Think of habits or routines to change. For example, instead of having a cigarette after meals, take a brief walk.

3 Days Before Your Quit Date

- Plan what you will do with the extra money when you stop buying cigarettes.
- Think of people you can reach out to when you need help or support.

2 Days Before Your Quit Date

- Consider buying nonprescription nicotine patches or nicotine gum. Or see your healthcare provider to get a prescription for the nicotine inhaler, nasal spray, or other medicine that can help.

1 Day Before Your Quit Date

- Put away lighters and ashtrays.
- Throw away all cigarettes and matches—no emergency stashes are allowed!
- Clean your clothes to get rid of the smell of cigarette smoke.

Quit Day

- Keep very busy.
- Remind family and friends that this is your quit day.
- Stay away from alcohol.
- Stay away from places where you used to smoke and people you used to smoke with. For example, if you're used to smoking while driving in your car: walk, take the bus, or ask a nonsmoking friend for a ride. If you're used to taking a 15-minute smoke break every half-day, do something healthy like taking a walk or planning a healthy next meal.
- Start a Quit Journal and write how you are feeling.
- Give yourself a treat or do something else special.

Commit to staying quit.

Make sure that all your cigarettes and ashtrays are thrown away. If you keep cigarettes or ashtrays around, sooner or later you'll break down and smoke one, then another, then another, and so on. Throw them away. Make it hard to start again. Because you are used to having something in your mouth, you may want to chew gum as a substitute for smoking. Or munch on carrots or celery. Drinking more water may help. Spend time with nonsmokers rather than with smokers. Think of yourself as a nonsmoker. Tell other people that you are a nonsmoker (for example, in restaurants). Stay away from places where there are a lot of smokers, such as bars. Avoid spending time with smokers. You can't tell others not to smoke, but you don't have to sit with them while they do. Plan on walking away from cigarette smoke. Spend time with nonsmokers and sit in the nonsmoking section of restaurants. Be prepared for relapse or difficult situations. Most people who go back to smoking cigarettes do so within the first 3 months after quitting. Many people try 5 or more times before they successfully quit. Avoid drinking alcohol, because it lowers your chances of success. Don't be distracted by the weight you may gain after quitting. Smokers usually don't gain more than 10 pounds when they stop smoking. Learn new ways to improve your mood and overcome depression. Start an exercise program. As you become more fit, you will not want the nicotine effects in your body. Regular exercise will help keep you from gaining weight. It can also help you feel less depressed if you have mild depression. Keep your hands busy. You may not know what to do with your hands for a while. Try reading, making repairs, knitting, needlework, pottery, drawing, making a plastic model, or doing a jigsaw puzzle. Join special interest groups that keep you involved in your new hobbies. Take on new activities. Change your routine. Take on new activities that don't include smoking. Join an exercise group and work out regularly. Sign up for an evening class or join a book club or study group at your place of worship. Go on more outings with your family or friends. Volunteer in your community. Learn ways to relax and manage stress. Join a quit-smoking

program. Some people do better in groups, or with a set of instructions to follow. That's fine, too. Remember, the goal is to quit smoking. It doesn't matter what method you choose, just as long as it works for you. Research has shown that participating in a program that provides support--either one-on-one or group support--increases your chances of successfully quitting. Consider using medicine to help you quit. Quitting smoking is a two-step process. You need to break the addiction to nicotine, the drug that is in tobacco, and you need to break the smoking habit. Nicotine replacement therapy and other medicines can help take care of the nicotine addiction and allow you to focus on breaking the habit of smoking. Nicotine replacement medicine helps you slowly lower the amount of nicotine in your body until you are completely free of nicotine. This can help you avoid the hard time of going "cold turkey." You can buy nicotine patches or gum without a prescription at your local pharmacy. You can get other forms of nicotine with a prescription from your healthcare provider, such as:

- nicotine inhaler
- nicotine lozenge
- nicotine nasal spray
- nicotine patch

Your healthcare provider can also prescribe other medicines, such as Zyban or Chantix, to help you quit.

- Zyban (bupropion) is an antidepressant medicine that can help you have less of a craving for nicotine. Usually you will start this medicine at least 1 week before the day you plan to quit.
- Chantix (varenicline) keeps the nicotine from making you feel good. This can make you have less desire to smoke. You should start this medicine 1 week before your quit date. It appears to be very effective in helping people stop smoking.

These medicines can have side effects, so you need to talk with your healthcare provider about what might work for you. You should see your provider every few weeks to check the effect of the medicines and your progress with quitting. Quitting can be hard work, but you can learn to live without cigarettes in your daily life – and feel much better for having quit. @ Published by RelayHealth.

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