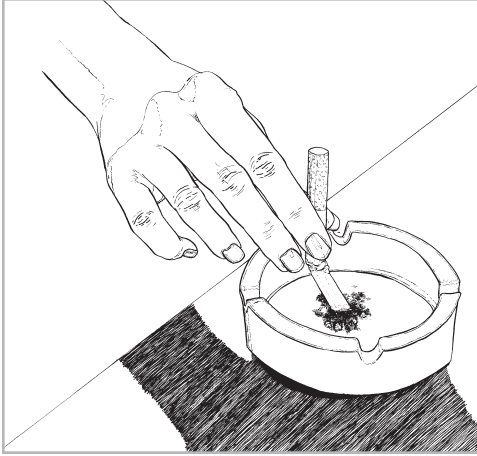


# Quitting Smoking



## ***The first step in quitting smoking is knowing you want to quit.***

Next, you'll want to seek out resources to help you quit for good. By quitting, you'll protect your body from toxic chemicals that can put you at risk for a variety of cancers and heart disease.

It's never too late to quit smoking. Quitting for good can take a few tries, but there are tools to help you succeed. Millions of Americans have quit smoking and so can you.

## **Reasons to Quit**

Quitting smoking will help you live a longer, healthier life by reducing your risk of heart attack, stroke, chronic lung disease, and lung and other cancers. The benefits start right away and last the rest of your life:

- **20 minutes** after quitting your heart rate and blood pressure drop.
- **2 weeks to 3 months** after quitting your circulation improves and your lungs work better.
- **1 year** after quitting your risk of heart disease is half that of a smoker's.
- **5 years** after quitting your risk of mouth, throat, esophagus and bladder cancers is cut in half.
- **10 years** after quitting your risk of lung cancer is half that of a smoker's.
- **15 years** after quitting your risk of heart disease is the same as a nonsmoker's.

When you quit smoking, you will save money and cigarette cravings won't rule your life. You will also:

- breathe better and cough less
- have whiter teeth and fresher breath
- have a better sense of smell and taste
- set a good example for the rest of your loved ones, especially if you have children

## **Tools to Help You Quit**

**Quit smoking programs and quit lines**—These can provide you with strategies to help you form a plan to quit and stick to it. They also offer one-on-one or group support as well as connections to other resources to help you quit. The National Cancer Institute's quit line is 1-877-448-7848.

**Prescription medicines**—These can help with cravings and reduce the effects of nicotine withdrawal. They can be used alone or along with nicotine replacement therapy.

**Nicotine replacement therapy**—These medicines help your body handle nicotine withdrawal once you quit smoking. Nicotine gums, lozenges and inhalers give you nicotine that's absorbed through your mouth. The nicotine in a patch is absorbed through your skin. Nicotine nasal spray is absorbed quickly through your nose, but you need a prescription from your doctor.

Talk to your doctor before you start any nicotine replacement options. Check and make sure they're safe with any other medicines you may be taking, and once you start them, discuss any side effects with your doctor.



To learn more, visit:

- **American Cancer Society**  
[www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)
- **National Cancer Institute**  
[www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov)

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## Coping with Quitting

Try these tips to help you fight cravings and quit smoking for good:

- **Remind yourself that you can choose to smoke or not.** Make a commitment to yourself to stop smoking. Try writing down why you want to quit and read it every day.
- **Find something else to do when a craving hits.** Take a walk, call a friend, journal or do something else you enjoy.
- **Cravings usually pass within 3 minutes, so wait it out.** They become weaker and less frequent the longer you go without smoking.
- **Don't let yourself think you can have just one.** Remind yourself that there is no good reason to smoke. And don't let yourself use smoking as a reward.
- **Take one day at a time.** Don't overwhelm yourself by thinking you will never be able to have another cigarette for the rest of your life.
- **If you make a mistake and smoke a cigarette, don't give up.** Quitting smoking is hard work and you're still learning how to be a nonsmoker.
- **Find healthy ways to relax and relieve stress.** Exercise is a good way to keep your mind off cigarettes. The longer you go without smoking, the better you can breathe and the easier it will be to exercise.
- **Get rid of things in your home or car that remind you of smoking.** Throw out matches, lighters and ashtrays. Replace them with reminders of why you want to quit smoking like pictures of your friends and family.
- **Have a plan for handling situations that might make you want to smoke.** One way to do this is to figure out your smoking triggers and try to avoid them. For example, if you associate alcohol or coffee with smoking, switch to nonalcoholic beverages or tea for a while.
- **Stay away from situations that remind you of smoking.** And don't hang out with people who smoke or go places where smoking is allowed.
- **Replace cigarettes with something harmless if you miss having something in your mouth.** Try toothpicks, sugarless gum, sugar-free lollipops or celery. Or you might even want to chew on a straw or stir stick.
- **Get support.** Find someone—friends or family—who you can talk to about quitting or when you're having cravings. Letting those close to you know your quit smoking goals can help you stay on track because they can hold you accountable and help encourage you.

### Remember:

- It's never too late to stop smoking.
- As soon as you quit smoking, your health begins to improve.
- Counseling, support groups, and nicotine replacement therapy can help you stay on track to quit for good.