

EAR, NOSE, THROAT & ALLERGY CENTER
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SMOKING CESSATION

Why is it so hard to quit?

Tobacco products contain Nicotine, which is highly addictive-probably as addictive as heroin or cocaine. Over time, your body becomes both physically and psychologically dependent on it. Finally, attempts to quit smoking are complicated by withdrawal reactions like depression, irritability, trouble sleeping, trouble concentrating, restlessness, headaches, weight gain, and excessive fatigue, as well as a lack of support. These symptoms can last from a few days to several weeks.

Why should you quit?

- Live longer and healthier
- Can improve the health of your housemates (children, spouse)
- Increases your energy and breathing ability
- Lowers risk of hear attack, stroke and cancer
- Saves money-for example, if you smoke a pack of cigarettes a day and each pack costs about \$4.50, then you will save about \$1,650 per year, about \$8200 in 5 years, 16,500 in 10 years.

What you can do:

- Talk to your health care provider – there are many smoking cessations aids available, both prescription. Check with your doctor and pharmacist before taking any of these products to see which one is best for you. Develop a plan with your healthcare provider, which may include nicotine replacement, prescription medication and/or counseling.
- Get started – mark a start date on your calendar. Remove cigarettes and ashtrays from your home, car and office. Don't be around other smokers. Stop smoking.....NOT EVEN A PUFF!
- Support – Talk to family, friends, and co-workers about your plan to stop smoking. Ask them not to smoke around you.
- Coping strategies – the four "A's" to help during tough times:
 1. **Avoid** – Avoid other smokers or places where smoking is commonplace. Avoid alcoholic beverages as these may increase your desire to smoke.
 2. **Alter** – Change your routine. Drink water/juices instead of alcohol or coffee. Take a walk or visit with someone during your coffee break. Change your route to work.
 3. **Alternatives** – Substitute raw vegetables like carrot sticks or celery, sugarless candy or gum for the habit of having a cigarette.
 4. **Activities** – Start an exercise program (talk to your doctor prior to beginning any exercise program). Try out a new "hands on" hobby to distract your from smoking and to keep your hands busy like woodworking or needlepoint.

Additional tips for specific withdrawal symptoms:

- **Craving for tobacco:** Distract yourself; Deep-breathing exercises; Remember that cravings are brief
 - **Irritability:** Take a few slow, deep breaths; soak in a hot bath
 - **Insomnia:** Take a walk several hours before bedtime; Avoid caffeinated beverages after noon; Read a book; Take a warm bath; banana or warm milk
 - **Increased Appetite:** Drink water or low calorie drinks; Make a survival kit (straws, cinnamon sticks, coffee stirrers, licorice, toothpicks, gum or fresh vegetables).
 - **Inability to concentrate:** Take a brisk walk; Lighten your schedule for a couple of days; Take more breaks
 - **Fatigue:** Get a good night's sleep; Take naps; Don't overdo it for 2-3 weeks
 - **Constipation, gas, stomach pain:** Drink plenty of fluids; increase fiber (fruit, raw vegetables, whole grain cereals); Talk to your doctor about diet changes.
5. **Dealing with Relapses** – Most relapses occur within the first 2-3 months. This is common so don't be discouraged. Some people may take several attempts before they can quit smoking completely.
 6. **Reward yourself** – Set-up rewards program for every milestone, like 1st month after quitting, 3rd month after quitting, and 6th months after quitting to keep your motivated.

What your doctor can do:

- Perform a physical exam and order diagnostic tests like laboratory blood work and a chest X-ray. This will help to identify health related conditions that might benefit from smoking cessation.
- Review your health history to make sure there are no contraindications with specific smoking cessation aids like allergies to medications or ingredients in these medications or conflicts with your current medications.
- Prescribe smoking cessation aids such as: Over-the-counter meds (nicotine gum, nicotine patch), or prescription aids: (nicotine spray, nicotine inhaler, Bupropion SR, or Chantix).
- Offer or recommend individual or group counseling to support you during the initial quitting and maintenance phase of your smoking cessation program
- Offer or recommend other alternative treatments like hypnosis or acupuncture.

What you can expect:

Benefits from quitting smoking:

- **Improved Physical Appearance**-minimizes or stops premature wrinkling of skin, bad breathe, stained teeth, gum disease, clothes/hair "smoke" odors, and yellow fingernails.
- **Improved Daily Activities**-Food tastes better, sense of smell improves, and decreases shortness of breath during ordinary activities like climbing stairs, walking, and performing light housework.

- **Decreased Financial Cost** – From both no longer purchasing cigarettes and the health care cost for medical treatment of conditions caused by smoking.
- **Health of Others** – Decreases risk of exposing others to the effects of second hand smoke; also sets an example to the youth

Benefits from quitting smoking according to the U.S. Surgeon General

- 20 minutes after: blood pressure lowers & body temperature normalizes
- 8 hours after: Carbon monoxide levels begins to normalize
- 24 hours after: Heart attack risk decreases
- 2 weeks to 3 months after: Blood flow improves and lung function increases
- 1-9 months after: improvement in coughing, sinus congestions, fatigue, shortness of breath
- 1 year after – Risk of developing coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker
- 5 years after – Risk of a stroke decreases to that of a non-smoker
- 10 years after – risk of death due to lung cancer death is halved. Risk of oral, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney and pancreatic cancer decreases.
- 15 years after – Risk of developing coronary heart disease is half that of a nonsmoker

More reasons to quit smoking:

According to the U.S. Surgeon General, about 440,000 people in the United States alone die from complications related to tobacco use. More deaths occur due to cigarette smoking than illegal drug use, AIDS, car accidents, alcohol-related deaths, suicides and homicide combined. Smoking accounts for about 30% of all cancer related deaths, including more than 80% of lung cancer deaths. Smoking has also been linked as the cause of many other diseases like heart disease, bronchitis, emphysema, stroke, and complications of pneumonia as well as causing an increased risk of miscarriage, premature births, stillbirth, infant death, and low birth weight in infants.

For this reason, the U.S. Surgeon General Recommends: "Smoking cessation (stopping smoking) represents the single most important step that smokers can take to enhance the length and quality of their lives."

References: Here are references that can provide additional information and support:

- American Cancer Society / (800) ACS-2345 / www.cancer.org
- American Heart Association / (800) 242-1793 / www.amhrt.org
- American Lung Association / (800) 586-4872 / www.lunusa.org
- American Academy of Medical Acupuncture / (800) 521-2262 / www.medicalacupuncture.org
- Nicotine Anonymous / (877) TRY-NICA / www.nicotine-anonymous.org
- Office of Smoking and Health, CDC / (770)-448-5705