

Getting Smoke Free



Be Smoke Free! You Really Can With Tools and Tips That Work

Congratulations! You've made a great decision to stop smoking, one that pays off in so many ways. Your doctor probably has shared with you all the healthy reasons to be smoke free and to stick with your choice. As you know, smoking causes lung cancer. But did you know that smokers have up to four times the risk of getting heart disease as nonsmokers? That's powerful motivation, but it still doesn't make it easy to quit. For most of us, becoming smoke free is just plain tough. As Mark Twain said, "Quitting smoking is easy. I've done it a thousand times."

Whether this is your thousandth time or your first, we support your decision. In these pages, we've collected tips, tools, and techniques from the experts that can help you get smoke free—and stay that way. With your doctor's advice, you can stop smoking for good, for many good reasons. We hope this booklet can be a part of your success.

Look How Fast You Bounce Back

For people who stop smoking, the countdown to better health starts within minutes...

When You're Smoke Free for...

- **20 minutes:** Your heart rate slows down to a more normal level
- **12 hours:** The level of carbon monoxide (a dangerous gas) in your blood drops to normal
- **2 weeks to 3 months:** Your circulation and breathing improve
- **1 to 9 months:** You have less coughing and shortness of breath, so you feel healthier
- **1 year:** Compared to someone who smokes, your risk of heart disease is cut in half

5 Steps to Success: Getting Ready to Quit

Step 1: Set a Quit Date

Choose a date within the next 2 weeks and mark it on your calendar. Tell your family and friends that you've decided to quit.

Step 2: Select a Quitting Method

There is no single way to become smoke free that is right for everyone: The trick is to find what works for you. Many people go cold turkey and stop smoking completely, all at once. Others cut down their tobacco use gradually, smoking less often each day.

Step 3: Consider Getting Extra Help

There are medicines that may help with the feelings of withdrawal that many people get when they quit smoking. These medicines are called nicotine replacement therapy (NRT). Nicotine gum, nicotine patches, and lozenges are all available without prescription. There are other kinds of NRT, such as nicotine inhalers and sprays, that require a prescription. Ask your doctor whether NRT is right for you; these medicines can double your chances of being smoke free permanently.

If you think you might benefit from the extra boost of nicotine medicines, take this quick quiz.

| | Yes | No |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Do you have your first cigarette within 30 minutes of waking? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Do you smoke 10 or more cigarettes a day? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Do you smoke 25 or more cigarettes a day? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Do you smoke even when you are sick? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Do you find it hard not to smoke where smoking isn't allowed? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Do you smoke more in the morning than during the rest of the day? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you answered “yes” to three or more of these questions, you may need extra help to be smoke free, whether with nicotine replacement medicines or with a quit-smoking program or support group.

Ask your doctor to recommend a program or group in your area, or try these resources.

American Heart Association
www.AmericanHeart.org
National Center
7272 Greenville Avenue
Dallas, TX 75231
Phone: 1-800-242-8721

American Cancer Society
www.cancer.org
250 Williams Street NW
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: 1-800-227-2345

Step 4: Plan for Your Quit Day

In the days before you quit, make sure you're ready.

- Stock up on oral substitutes, such as sugarless gum and carrot sticks
- Decide on what extra help you may need and make the necessary arrangements. This may include NRT or a quit-smoking program
- Sign up for a quit-smoking support class, or get the help of a friend who has quit smoking

Step 5: Stop Smoking on Your Quit Day

These tips can help your quit day be a success. On your quit day

- Get rid of all cigarettes, lighters, matches, ashtrays, and any other smoking-related items
- Be active: Take a walk, exercise, or spend time at a hobby
- Drink lots of water and juices
- Begin using nicotine replacement, if desired and approved by your doctor
- Start attending a quit-smoking class
- Avoid alcohol, or reduce your drinking, to keep your resolve strong
- Avoid situations where the urge to smoke is strong

Coping Techniques You Can Count On

It's human nature: Once you're smoke free, there will probably be times when you're tempted to have a cigarette and times when you do smoke—and that's okay! These tips and techniques can help you stay on track.

Craving? Counterattack!

When the urge to smoke strikes, keep in mind that this craving usually lasts less than

5 minutes, so try to wait it out. Try these six suggestions

1. Instead of reaching for a cigarette, reach for carrots, apples, raisins, or sugar-free gum.
2. Wash your hands or some dishes, or take a shower.
3. Teach yourself to relax quickly with deep breaths. Take a deep breath and let it out slowly; do this 10 times and hold the last breath while you picture a peaceful scene.
4. Light a candle instead of a cigarette.
5. Give yourself a change of scene—go outside or go to a different room.
6. Remember: Doing something to handle a craving is better than doing nothing.

If You Slip...

It may be helpful to know that the slip-up period is often within the first 3 months of quitting. If this happens to you, don't get discouraged: You're definitely not a failure—you've just had a setback. You should use this situation to help yourself get back on track. Identify exactly what situation triggered your smoking, be aware of it, and plan how to handle it when it comes up again. (Try some of the coping techniques listed above.)

If you need more support, ask your best partner in health: your doctor. He or she can suggest many resources to help you.

Keeping the Pounds Down

It's a myth that being smoke free automatically leads to weight gain. What happens is that your body uses food more slowly when you first stop smoking; and some people may eat more when they quit. To avoid adding pounds, watch what you eat and enjoy physical activity. These tips can help you get started.

Healthy food habits

- Help yourself to at least five servings a day of fruits and vegetables
- Choose whole-grain cereals, pastas, and breads
- Snack on fat-free or low-fat items such as pretzels
- Satisfy your sweet tooth with sugar-free hard candy
- Get familiar with food labels and select products low in saturated fat and cholesterol
- Limit your intake of alcohol and caffeine
- Drink lots of water

Excellent exercise

Walking and other activities can help you lose or maintain your weight and, at the same time, help you feel calmer and improve your mood. (Before beginning any exercise program, check with your doctor.) Try these easy ways to be more active.

- Walk around the neighborhood or an indoor shopping mall
- Do gardening or yard work
- Use the stairs instead of the elevator or escalator
- Park farther away from stores or offices, and walk
- Ride a bicycle
- Learn to dance or attend aerobic dance classes

Instead of smoking...

- Keep your hands busy playing with a paper clip, pencil, or other small objects, such as marbles
- Brush your teeth to keep a fresh taste in your mouth
- Do crossword puzzles, write letters, or knit
- Take up a new sport
- Take a relaxing break to breathe deeply or meditate
- Jot down your reasons for quitting—and keep the list where you can see it
- Spend time with other nonsmokers
- Go to nonsmoking places, such as stores, movies, and libraries

Smoking is one of several risk factors that increase the chance of heart disease and heart attack. Smoking makes it even more important to control other risk factors you may have, such as high cholesterol.

Remember...

Being smoke free is a big step toward better health. So once you make the decision to stop smoking, stay positive—congratulate yourself on quitting, and keep going! It may not be easy, but it's well worth the effort. Because heart health counts.