

How to Quit Smoking

Smoking is dangerous to your health. Quitting will reduce your risk of dying from heart disease, blood vessel disease, lung problems, cancer and stroke.

Talk to your doctor about quitting. Ask about classes and support groups in your area. Get support and encouragement and learn how to deal with stress. Talk with your doctor about medicines and other aids to help you quit.

Before you try to stop smoking, commit to stopping. Smoking is a learned behavior that you must unlearn. It is not easy to stop, but it can be done if you are serious about quitting. Stopping will help you live a healthier and longer life.

Getting Ready to Quit

Follow these tips to get ready to quit:

- Cut down the number of cigarettes you smoke each day.
 - ▶ Smoke only half a cigarette each time.
 - ▶ Smoke only during the even hours of the day.
- Clean out ashtrays and start putting them away one by one. Clean the drapes, the car, your office, or anything else that smells of tobacco smoke.
- Get a friend or spouse to quit with you.
- Start exercising before you quit.
- Switch to a brand of cigarettes you do not like as much.
- Throw away spare lighters.
- Smoke alone if you like to smoke with people.
- Become aware of why you smoke each cigarette. Avoid the things that cause you to smoke.

- Write down a list of the top 5 reasons you want to quit. Read this list daily.

Pick a date to quit and slowly reduce your smoking until your quit date. On your quit date, stop completely. If you smoke a lot at work, quit during a vacation.

The Day You Quit

- Throw away your cigarettes, lighters and ashtrays.
- Ask for help from family and friends.
- Make plans for the day and keep busy. Spend time in places where smoking is not allowed such as a library or the movies. Change your routine.
- Drink water, but not more than 2 Liters. This will help to remove chemicals from your body.
- Keep celery, sugarless gum, hard candy, straws or toothpicks handy to help meet the urge of something in your mouth.
- Try deep breathing exercises and listen to relaxation tapes.
- Get 30 minutes of exercise.
- Eat regular meals.
- Start a money jar with the money you save by not buying cigarettes.
- Reward yourself at the end of the day for not smoking.

Over the next days and weeks you may be coping with withdrawal symptoms and cravings. Exercise and relaxation can help with withdrawal symptoms of anger, edginess or irritability. There will be times when you really want to smoke. Wait. The urge will pass in a few minutes. Take slow, deep breaths until you relax and have control of the craving. Take your mind off smoking by thinking about something else or focus on the things you are doing. Mark your success every day on a calendar. Reward yourself each day and week.

Setbacks

It is hard to quit smoking. Most people try several times before they succeed. If you do smoke, do not give up on yourself. Remind yourself of how many hours, days or weeks you have already gotten through. Identify what triggers your desire to smoke. Remind yourself why you quit smoking. Practice what to do when you feel the urge to smoke. Reward yourself for your willpower and courage.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.