

MAKE SMOKING HISTORY[®]

Quitting smoking: tips and benefits

Why quit?

Nobody expects serious smoking-related illness to happen to them, but it can happen to anyone. Smoking can result in many serious and disabling conditions, including cancer, cardiovascular disease, chronic lung disease and asthma. Even younger smokers can experience serious health problems from smoking. The good news is that stopping smoking has major and immediate health benefits for men and women at any age, even those already suffering smoking-related illness.¹ What's more, it can increase your confidence, improve your social life and help you save money! The single best thing you can do for your health and your future is to quit - and do it now!

Benefits of quitting

You will start feeling better as soon as you quit, as your body starts to repair itself.

Short Term Benefits

- Most nicotine is out of your system in 12 hours. Within five days, most nicotine by-products have gone.
- Carbon monoxide levels in the blood drop dramatically within the first 24 hours, meaning there is more oxygen in your bloodstream.
- Taste and sense of smell improves within days.
- Exercising becomes easier and you feel and smell fresher. Many quitters also report having more energy.
- In the first month, blood pressure will return to normal and your immune system will be on the road to recovery.
- Blood flow to the hands and feet improves in the first few months.
- Within two months, your lungs will no longer be producing the extra phlegm that smoking causes.

Long Term Benefits

- Your risk of many health conditions is reduced, including lung and other cancers, heart attack, stroke and chronic lung disease.¹
- Stopping smoking reduces the incidence and progression of lung disease including chronic bronchitis and emphysema.
- After quitting smoking for ten years the risk of lung cancer is less than half that of a continuing smoker and the risk continues to decline.
- There is a rapid decline in the risk of heart disease or stroke within a year, and after that the risk more gradually declines to that of someone who had never smoked.²

But how do I quit?

Smoking is a complex addiction made up of physical, habitual and psychological aspects. Some people think quitting is all about willpower and self-discipline. But to quit successfully requires self-awareness, careful preparation and planning. It involves taking the time to understand your smoking patterns and triggers, and developing strategies to cope in situations where you would normally reach for a cigarette. Smokers may have to make several attempts before they finally quit. The best advice is to keep trying and learn from previous attempts. You can quit.

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Quitting methods

There are different quitting methods and products to help manage nicotine withdrawal symptoms. Choose something that is safe and suits you. Stick with the tried and tested approaches and be wary of methods or products that seem too good to be true. No matter what method you use, get the support you need and always plan and prepare your quitting attempt. This will improve your chances of success.

Cold turkey or reducing

For many smokers going 'cold turkey' is a quit method that works for them. This means stopping completely without cutting down. 'Reducing' involves either cutting down the amounts smoked or delaying your first cigarette each day. With this method, you need to commit stopping altogether within two weeks.

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

Using nicotine replacement products (gum, patches, lozenges, sublingual tablets or inhalers) can potentially double your chances of quitting.³ Speak to your doctor or pharmacist before using NRT.

Other pharmacological aids

Bupropion (sold as Zyban) and Varenicline (sold as Champix) are medications prescribed to help people stop smoking.⁴ Your doctor can advise whether either of these might be suitable options for you.

Alternative approaches

While some people opt for methods such as acupuncture and hypnotherapy, there is currently insufficient evidence that they are effective for quitting smoking.³

Getting help to quit is important

- Call the Quitline 13 7848 which provides free quit kits, confidential counselling and a 6-session call-back service.
- Cancer Council Western Australia's *Fresh Start* courses are run in communities and workplaces. Call the Cancer Council Helpline on 13 11 20 or access more information online at www.cancerwa.asn.au/prevention/tobacco/.
- Ask your GP or pharmacist for advice and support to help you quit.
- A brochure on 'Choosing the Best Way to Quit' is also available from HealthInfo on 1300 135 030.
- Try QuitCoach, a free interactive quitting website, at www.quitcoach.org.au.

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¹ US Department of Health and Human Services. *The health benefits of smoking cessation: a report of the Surgeon General*. DHHS Publication No. (CDC) 90-8416. Rockville, MD: US Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Centres for Disease Control, Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office of Smoking and Health; 1990.

² National Heart Foundation of Australia. Tobacco and cardiovascular disease: position paper. Melbourne: National Heart Foundation of Australia; 2003.

³ Miller M, Wood L. Smoking cessation interventions: review of evidence and implications for best practice in health care settings. Canberra: Commonwealth Department of Health and Aging; 2001.

⁴ Scollo MM Winstanley MH, editors. *Tobacco in Australia: facts and issues*. 3rd ed. Melbourne: Cancer Council Victoria; 2008.