

When You Quit Smoking



**Your
Plan
for Healthier Living
Without Tobacco**

PART 1 PLANNING TO QUIT 1

Can I succeed?	1
What are the benefits of quitting?.....	2
What if I keep smoking?	3
Does smoking affect children?	7
What if my health is already affected? ...	8
How can I prepare?	8
What therapies can help?	10

PART 2 FIRST WEEKS POST-TOBACCO..... 13

How will I feel?	13
Will I gain weight?	14
What tips can help me?.....	15
What if I light up again?	17
If I give up, is it harder next time?.....	17

PART 3 YOUR LIFE BEYOND TOBACCO 18

Will my cravings stop?.....	18
What about my smoking-related health risks?.....	19
Where can I get help and more info?.....	21

Part 1

Planning to Quit



Can I succeed?

Absolutely! Every year in the U.S., nearly 1.3 million people give up smoking and stay smoke-free. These people are following a decades-long trend of lower smoking rates. The American Heart Association says that half of all Americans who ever smoked have

quit. Add to that the latest understanding of nicotine addiction as well as new therapies, and you have every reason to believe you can give up tobacco for good.

You know the reality—quitting isn't easy for many people. However, this guide will give you tools to increase your chances for success. It will tell you about:

- How to prepare
- How you will feel
- Benefits of quitting
- Risks of continued smoking
- Resources to help you quit
- Where to get more information

Giving up cigarettes is a huge life change. By deciding to quit, you have already shown both personal courage and a willingness to take on a challenge. So congratulations!

What are the benefits of quitting?

The benefits of quitting begin immediately, and they include:

- **Improved health.** Your risk of having health problems from smoking decreases right away. For example, your risk for heart attack goes down within 24 hours after your last cigarette. Other health benefits are described in Parts 2 and 3 of this guide.
- **Money savings.** The average person will save \$2200 each year by not buying cigarettes.

- **Better psychological health.** Former smokers report a higher level of self-esteem and lower levels of anxiety. They also feel more secure by having removed a major health threat from their lives.
- **Practical benefits.** You'll have more time and energy for activities you enjoy. Your breath, clothes, and house will no longer smell like cigarettes. Stained teeth will be a thing of the past. Your sense of smell and taste will improve so you'll enjoy food more. Also, you remove the risk of causing a smoking-related fire.

What if I keep smoking?

Smoking is the leading cause of death in the U.S. That's because nicotine is a poison similar to cyanide in strength. It's even sometimes used in insecticides due to its deadly properties. Therefore, when you smoke, you are literally poisoning yourself.

And even if smoking doesn't shorten your lifespan, you may still suffer from a variety of chronic diseases that will lower your quality of life.

Unfortunately, the list of health dangers potentially faced by tobacco users is long. They include:

Cancer, such as:

- Bladder
- Cervical
- Esophageal

- Head and neck (includes oral cancers)
- Kidney
- Pancreatic
- Stomach
- Lung cancer

The risk of lung cancer increases 50 to 100 percent for each cigarette pack smoked per day. About 85% of lung cancer cases are related to cigarette smoking. And medical treatments are often not effective—only 15% of patients survive more than five years after a lung cancer diagnosis.

Did you know?

Cigarette smoke contains over 60 carcinogenic (cancer-causing) substances.



A cancerous tumor on the tongue caused by tobacco use.

Heart disease. Smoking reduces the blood supply to the heart, which can lead to heart disease. Heart disease can then lead to heart attacks and congestive heart failure. The risk of heart disease increases roughly 100 percent for each pack of cigarettes smoked per day.

Stroke. Smoking sets off a chain of events that can lead to stroke:

1. It lowers HDL (“good”) cholesterol and raises LDL (“bad”) cholesterol.
2. LDL cholesterol builds up in your arteries as plaque and causes them to thicken, narrow, and become hard.
3. The narrowing reduces blood flow to tissues, leading to tissue death.
4. When this happens in the brain, it is commonly known as a stroke.

The more cigarettes smoked per day, the faster the hardening process occurs. Arteries can remain thickened years after a person quits, so quitting early is most beneficial.

COPD. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) includes conditions that block airflow and make breathing difficult. Eighty percent of COPD cases are caused by smoking, because the substances in smoke are deposited as sticky tar on the lining and in the air sacs of the lungs.

Did you know?

The average smoker pours 1 cup of tar into the lungs per year.



Lungs covered with tar deposits

COPD conditions include:

- **Emphysema**, breathlessness caused by damage to the air sacs in the lungs. There is no cure.
- **Chronic bronchitis**, coughing with a lot of mucus.
- **Asthma**, inflammation of the breathing airways; smoking makes asthma medications less effective.

Other conditions. Smoking can contribute to a variety of other health problems. Just because you smoke doesn't automatically mean you will suffer one, but you greatly increase your chances. They include:

- Increased blood pressure
- Macular degeneration, leading to loss of eyesight
- Cataracts
- Ulcers
- Periodontal disease, leading to tooth loss

- Vascular disease, leading to amputation
- Less skin elasticity, leading to premature wrinkles
- Less energy due to less oxygen in the system
- Weakened immune system
- Certain kinds of leukemia
- Pneumonia
- Infertility
- Premature menopause
- Osteoporosis

Does smoking affect children?

Yes! Parents who smoke raise health concerns for their children who breathe in second-hand smoke. These dangers include:

- Higher levels of pneumonia and bronchitis
- Greater risk of developing asthma
- Decreased learning abilities in reading and math
- Higher rate of behavioral problems
- Higher risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)

Did you know?

About 80 percent of children hospitalized for breathing problems had been exposed to tobacco smoke.



What if my health is already affected?

The body is resilient and rebounds from many conditions naturally, given a healthy environment. As a matter of fact, your body begins to heal almost immediately after your last cigarette. For example, nerve endings for taste and smell begin to heal within 48 hours. It doesn't matter how long or how much you've smoked. **Everyone will experience improved health after quitting.**

How can I prepare?

Learn about addiction. Every smoker is addicted to a different combination of the stimulants contained in cigarette smoke. You become addicted to these stimulants, and then you want to smoke more. The more you understand how the addiction works in your body and how it affects your

thinking, the better you'll be at overcoming it.

Quitting is an individual process; it's different for everyone. Ask yourself what you like about smoking, and write these things down. By writing them down, you will understand your addiction better.



Choose a quit date. Selecting a quit date will keep you from delaying action. You may think there are too many pressures in life to quit now. The reality is that there's no perfect time to quit—life's pressures don't stop for our convenience. However, choosing a quit date will get you to start thinking about when is best to quit and will help you prepare in advance. The more you prepare, the more doable quitting will seem.

Change your thinking about smoking. The power of nicotine addiction can make

smokers believe things that aren't true. For example, many people question whether quitting is even possible even though they know that millions quit every year.

Think of giving up cigarettes as a choice and not as something you're doing to deprive yourself. If you can't imagine being smoke-free permanently, tell yourself you'll deal with tomorrow when it comes, but for today you've made the decision not to light up.

Practical Preparations. Plan activities for the first few days after you quit so you won't have to make decisions during the initial withdrawal period. Keep busy. Exercise. Go places where you cannot smoke, such as the theater. Throw away all lighters, matches, and ashtrays so you don't see anything that makes you think of smoking.

What therapies can help?

Most people who quit do so "cold turkey" without using medications or other therapies. However, using a therapy or combination of therapies can quadruple your chances of stopping for good. People who can't quit cold turkey or who want therapeutic help have several options:

Nicotine replacements systems include the nicotine skin patch, gums, nasal sprays, and inhalers. These work by replacing the nicotine in your body that used to be supplied by cigarettes. The goal is to break

the physical habit of smoking first (holding the cigarette, lighting it, putting it out, etc.). Then you gradually decrease the dose of nicotine supplied by the replacement



system. After several weeks, you stop using it completely. Some people question whether replacement therapy is safe. They are safe if used correctly. (Remember, it's **tobacco** that's bad for your

health.) With a replacement system, you're avoiding the 4,000 chemicals found in tobacco products.

As with any medication, you must follow directions for the system to be effective and to avoid side effects caused by nicotine overdose.

Replacement systems are not for everyone. It's best to check with a doctor before using one.

Counseling. Many people find counseling to be helpful in quitting, and research supports this. Studies have found that counseling along with a drug treatment is even more effective than counseling by itself. Issues that are often addressed in counseling are smoking “triggers”, (see Part 2), alcohol consumption, and previous attempts at quitting. If you want to try

counseling as part of your plan, ask your doctor for a referral.

Zyban is the trade name for a non-nicotine pill available by prescription. It works by boosting certain chemicals in the brain, the same way that nicotine does. These chemicals give you a sense of energy and well-being, similar to what you feel when you smoke, which allows you to wean yourself off nicotine. Zyban also helps decrease withdrawal symptoms. It can be used with nicotine replacement systems with your doctor's approval. Like nicotine replacement, Zyban is not for everyone.

Varenicline is another non-nicotine pill available by prescription. It works by stimulating receptors in the brain, similar to what nicotine does. This helps to relieve cravings and withdrawal symptoms. Also, it blocks nicotine from acting on brain receptors, preventing it from giving you a pleasurable effect and reducing the urge to smoke. Research has shown Varenicline to be more effective than Zyban at helping people quit. However, it must be used under a doctor's supervision since serious side effects have been reported.

Behavior modification can help you change the habits that trigger you to smoke. These triggers include phone conversations, coffee breaks, meals, sexual activity, boredom, and traffic problems. When you recognize a trigger, you can modify it or substitute it for another activity. For example, you might go for a walk instead of taking a coffee break. Behavior modification is often addressed in a counseling setting.

Part 2

First Weeks Post-Tobacco

How will I feel?

When you stop smoking, the lack of nicotine causes you to feel various symptoms, some of them unpleasant. These symptoms are called withdrawal effects, and they can be physical as well as psychological. Although all nicotine is gone from your body within 72 hours after your last tobacco use, withdrawal symptoms can linger for much longer periods of time.

Psychological withdrawal effects, which normally end within the first month after quitting, include:

- Anxiety and irritability
- Obsessive thoughts about smoking
- Restlessness
- Trigger-induced cravings
- Difficulty concentrating
- Depression
- A sense of loss

You may experience these physical withdrawal effects:

- Insomnia
- Drowsiness

- Tremors
- Sweating
- Dizziness
- Headaches
- Digestive disturbances
- Coughing
- Oral ulcers
- Increased appetite
- Weight gain
- Change in metabolism



Physical withdrawal effects normally go away after 3 or 4 weeks, but may continue longer for some people.

Will I gain weight?

Nicotine decreases your appetite, so when you stop smoking you may experience an

increased desire to eat. Also, with no nicotine in your system, your metabolism slows. For these reasons it is normal for many people to gain around 10 pounds after they quit. If gaining weight concerns you, remember that weight gain is reversible, but health effects caused by tobacco sometimes are not. The physical and psychological health benefits of quitting far outweigh the risks from weight gain that former smokers may experience.

What tips can help me?

- Time craving episodes. You'll find that most last less than 3 minutes, and focusing on your smartphone's timer for that duration will take your attention away from the craving.
- Recognize your smoking triggers, and substitute other activities or behaviors for them.
- If you're thinking about lighting up, think to yourself that it's not possible to have just one. If that were true, you wouldn't have had the thousands of cigarettes you've smoked previously.
- Throw away or hide all ashtrays, lighters, matches and any other objects that make you think of smoking.
- When you have a craving, think of quitting as giving yourself a set of precious gifts: a better quality of life, a

longer life, a healthier body, and greater self-esteem.

- Write down all the reasons you are quitting and read them whenever you think about lighting up.
- If you feel hungry, eat. If you feel anger, talk through it with someone. For loneliness, call a friend. If you feel tired, sleep. Don't allow yourself to think that a cigarette is the best way to handle any of these issues.
- Surround yourself with supportive people to help keep a positive attitude. Avoid negative people, places, and things as best you can, especially in the first weeks after quitting.
- Plan activities that don't allow tobacco. Go to a museum or any other public place where smoking is prohibited. Visit non-smoking friends.
- Get a small ball or Play-Doh for squeezing, or fiddle with an object to keep your hands busy.
- Suck, bite, or chew. You may miss putting something in your mouth. Some people substitute cigarettes with lollipops or candy. Sugarless chewing gum or lozenges, carrots, and celery sticks are good substitutes. Licorice roots from a health food store is a healthy choice in moderate amounts.

- Avoid alcohol. Once alcohol is in your system, your defenses diminish greatly.
- Change your routine. Take a different route to work to avoid familiar triggers along the way. Watch TV in a different chair. Changing your behavior patterns helps change your responses.

What if I light up again?

First, it is important to understand that you should **NEVER** smoke while using nicotine-replacement therapies—this can cause serious side effects from nicotine overdose.

Lighting up does not necessarily mean your attempt to quit is over. Some former smokers report being able to quit successfully despite an occasional lapse. For other people, one lapse may lead to more, and then a return to a full-fledged habit. If you find yourself smoking on-and-off again for more than a few weeks, you might consider setting a new quit date.

If I give up, is it harder next time?

No. In fact the opposite is true. Each time you try to quit you learn more about what helps and what doesn't, increasing your chances for being successful next time. If you do start smoking again, it's alright. Just regroup, set a new quit date, and make plans to quit.

Part 3

Your Life Beyond Tobacco

Will my cravings stop?

Most smokers have cravings long after they quit smoking. However, the cravings become less intense and occur less often with each passing day. With time and experience, you learn how to deal with them, so even if you crave a cigarette long after you quit, it's easy to manage.



However, nicotine addiction can try to trick you. After several months of success you may feel a false sense of security and start to believe you can smoke one or two without developing a habit again. **This thinking is wrong.** Even after years of smoke-free living, you can very easily become re-addicted by smoking just a few cigarettes. That's how addictions work. Why risk becoming addicted again and throwing away all the hard work you accomplished?

What about my smoking-related health risks?

By now you know that you enjoy health benefits immediately after you quit smoking. The list of benefits below shows how the risk of health issues decreases over time.

1 to 9 months after quitting

- Chronic coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, and shortness of breath decrease and often disappear.
- Cilia re-grow in the lungs, allowing your lungs to clear out mucus and infection better.

1 year

- Risk of heart disease has declined to half that of smokers.

5 years

- Lung cancer death rate declines by almost one-half.
- Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat and esophagus is half that of smokers.

10 years

- Lung cancer death rate has declined to match that of nonsmokers.
- Precancerous cells are replaced.
- Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney, and pancreas decreases.

13 years

- Risk of tooth loss caused by smoking matches that of someone who has never smoked.

15 years

- Risk of heart disease matches that of nonsmokers.
- Risk of stroke matches that of nonsmokers.

20 years

- (Women) Risk of death from all smoking-related causes matches that of women who have never smoked.

Where can I get help and more info?

Your doctor will gladly give you information and answer questions about quitting.

Local librarians will be happy to help you find books and other resources.

Nicotine Anonymous holds meetings for people who want to quit using a 12-step program. Check online or ask a librarian if there is a chapter nearby.

Health organizations maintain websites which provide an abundance of information.

- Nicotine Anonymous
<http://www.nicotine-anonymous.org/>
- The American Lung Association
<http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/>
- American Cancer Society
<http://www.cancer.org/>
- Smokefree
<http://www.smokefree.gov/>
- The Merck Manual of Diagnosis and Therapy
<http://www.merck.com/mmpe/index.html>