

National Cancer Institute



# Clearing the Air

QUIT SMOKING  
TODAY

U.S. DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES

National Institutes  
of Health

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>Before you START a Smoke-Free Life</b> .....	2
Quitting is Hard .....	2
Preparing to Quit .....	3
<b>Now Let's START</b> .....	12
Set a Quit Date .....	12
Tell your Family, Friends, and Coworkers You Plan to Quit .....	13
Anticipate and Plan for the Challenges You Will Face While Quitting.....	14
Remove Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products from Your Home, Car, and Workplace.....	16
Talk to Your Doctor about Getting Help to Quit .....	17
My Quitting Worksheet .....	19
<b>Today's the Big Day – Your Quit Date</b> .....	21
Keep Busy and Find New Things to Do .....	21
Stay Away From What Tempts You.....	23
Plan to Reward Yourself.....	25
<b>Quitting for Good – You Can Do It!</b> .....	27
Keep Your Guard Up.....	27
Don't Get Discouraged if You Slip.....	28
Stay Upbeat.....	29
Focus on a New, Healthier Lifestyle.....	30
<b>Remember the Long-Term Rewards</b> .....	32
<b>For More Information</b> .....	34
National Cancer Institute .....	34
American Cancer Society.....	35
American Heart Association .....	35
American Legacy Foundation .....	35
American Lung Association .....	36
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention .....	36



# Introduction

From those of us at the National Cancer Institute: Congratulations! You are taking the first step to quitting cigarette smoking.

We wrote this booklet with the help of ex-smokers and experts. It can help you prepare to quit and support you in the days and weeks after you quit. It also describes problems to expect when you quit. Being prepared can help you through the hard times.

Many tips are offered in this booklet—choose what works best for you. You can quit for good, even if you've tried before. In fact, most smokers try to quit many times before they succeed.

Stay upbeat. Keep trying. Use what you learn each step of the way until you quit for good. Soon, you too will be an ex-smoker.

---

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) is part of the National Institutes of Health, one of 11 agencies in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NCI is the U.S. Government's principal agency for cancer research and training.



Before you

# START a Smoke-Free Life

## Quitting is hard

Many ex-smokers say quitting was the hardest thing they ever did.

Do you feel hooked? You're probably addicted to nicotine. Nicotine is in all tobacco products. It makes you feel calm and satisfied, yet also alert and focused. But the more you smoke, the more nicotine you need to feel good. Soon, you don't feel "normal" without nicotine. This is nicotine addiction.

It takes time to break free from nicotine addiction. It may take more than one try to quit for good. So don't give up too soon. You *will* feel good again.

Quitting is also hard because smoking is a big part of your life. You may enjoy holding a cigarette and puffing on it. You may smoke when you are stressed, bored, or angry. You may light up when you drink coffee or alcohol, talk on the phone, drive, or are with other smokers. After months and years, smoking has become part of your daily routine. You may light up without even thinking about it.

Quitting isn't easy. Just reading this booklet won't do it. You may try to quit several times before you're finally done with cigarettes. But you will learn something each time you try. It takes willpower and strength to beat your addiction to nicotine. Remember that millions of people have quit smoking for good. You can be one of them.

Just thinking about quitting may make you anxious. But your chances will be better if you get ready first. Quitting works best when you're prepared.



## KEEP IN MIND

### Preparing to quit

#### Think about why you want to quit

Decide for sure that you want to quit, and then promise yourself you'll do it. It's okay to have mixed feelings. Don't let that stop you. There will be times every day that you don't feel like quitting. You will have to stick with it anyway. Find reasons that are important to you.

Think of health reasons, such as:

- ◆ My body will start healing right away.
- ◆ I will have more energy and focus.
- ◆ I will feel more physically fit.
- ◆ I will have whiter teeth and healthier gums.
- ◆ I will cough less and breathe easier.
- ◆ I will lower my risk of cancer, heart attack, stroke, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and cataracts.
- ◆ I will reduce the risk of fertility problems, premature births, and lower birthweight babies.
- ◆ I will no longer expose my family and friends to secondhand smoke.

Your body gets more than nicotine when you smoke.

Cigarette smoke contains more than 4,000 chemicals. Some of these chemicals are also found in wood varnish, the insecticide DDT, rat poison, and nail polish remover.

The ashes, tar, gases, and other poisons—such as arsenic—in cigarettes harm your body over time. They damage your heart and lungs. They also make it harder for you to taste and smell things and to fight infection.

---

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Reducing Tobacco Use: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2000.



## KEEP IN MIND

Even a little secondhand smoke is dangerous.

Secondhand smoke—also called environmental tobacco smoke—comes from a burning tobacco product and from the smoke exhaled by smokers. Inhaling secondhand smoke is called involuntary or passive smoking.

Nonsmokers who breathe secondhand smoke may:

- ◆ develop cancer or heart disease
- ◆ have breathing problems
- ◆ get colds and the flu more easily
- ◆ die younger than people who don't breathe secondhand smoke

Pregnant women who breathe secondhand smoke may:

- ◆ give birth to low-weight babies
- ◆ have babies who are more likely to die of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)

Children who breathe secondhand smoke may:

- ◆ have breathing problems, such as asthma
- ◆ get more ear infections
- ◆ develop more lung infections, such as pneumonia

---

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coordinating Center for Health Promotion, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2006.

Think of some other reasons to quit, such as:

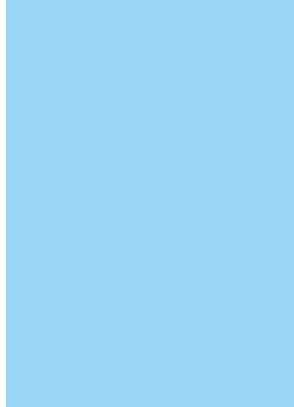
- ◆ I will be proud of myself.
- ◆ I will make my family, friends, and coworkers proud of me.
- ◆ I will be a better role model for others, especially my kids.
- ◆ I will feel more in control of my life.
- ◆ I will have more money to spend.
- ◆ I will save time by not taking cigarette breaks, buying cigarettes, or searching for a light.

### Write down why you want to quit

Write down all the reasons you want to quit. Keep your list where you'll see it often. Good places for your list are:

- ◆ where you keep your cigarettes
- ◆ in your wallet or purse
- ◆ in your kitchen
- ◆ in your car

When you reach for a cigarette, find your list of reasons for quitting. It will remind you why you want to stop.



---

*My reasons to quit are*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## KEEP IN MIND

Pregnancy and smoking are not a good mix.

If you are pregnant or thinking about having a baby, there's no better time to quit smoking than now. Women who smoke have a harder time getting pregnant. If they do get pregnant, they risk losing the baby or having a stillborn baby. And babies born to mothers who smoke:

- ◆ may be smaller than normal at birth
- ◆ are more likely to die of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
- ◆ may be cranky, restless, and get sick more often
- ◆ are more likely to have learning problems as they develop

The good news is that quitting can help you have a healthy baby. It helps to quit any time during your pregnancy, but it's even better to quit before you become pregnant. Information to help you stop smoking is available in English and Spanish at [www.smokefree.gov/resources.html](http://www.smokefree.gov/resources.html).

---

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Women and Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2001.



## Learn how much you depend on nicotine

Knowing how addicted you are to nicotine can help you quit. It can help you decide if you need extra support, such as joining a quit-smoking program or taking medication to help you quit.

Answer the six simple questions in this nicotine addiction test. Your score will help you figure out how much you depend on nicotine.

<b>1. How soon after you wake up do you smoke your first cigarette?</b>			
	Less than 5 minutes		
	6–30 minutes		
	31–60 minutes		
	After 1 hour		
<b>2. Do you smoke more frequently in the hours after waking than during the rest of the day?</b>			
	Yes		
	No		
<b>3. Do you find it difficult not to smoke?</b>			
	Yes		
	No		
<b>4. Which cigarettes would you most hate to give up?</b>			
	The first one in the morning		
	Any other		
<b>5. How many cigarettes do you smoke a day?</b>			
	10 or less		
	11–20		
	21–30		
	31 or more		
<b>6. Do you smoke when you're so sick that you're home in bed?</b>			
	Yes		
	No		
<b>Score</b>			

## Understand what your score means

If you scored even a single point, you may be dependent on nicotine. The higher your score, the more dependent you are. Remember—no matter what your score, you'll have to work hard to quit.

Source: Heatherton, TF, Kozlowski LT, Frecker RC, Fagerstrom KO. The Fagerstrom Test for Nicotine Dependence: a revision of the Fagerstrom Tolerance Questionnaire. *British Journal of Addictions*. 1991; 86:1119–1127.



### **Understand what makes you want to smoke**

Wanting to smoke is not just an unhealthy habit. You want to smoke because your body now relies on nicotine. When the amount of nicotine in your body runs low, it triggers a craving—a strong, almost uncontrollable urge—for another cigarette. You may feel jittery, short-tempered, or anxious when you haven't smoked. Your body wants nicotine.

Triggers—people, places, activities, and feelings you associate with smoking—also make you want to smoke. Your triggers might be hearing the sounds of a party, finishing a task, or smelling coffee. Whatever your triggers, they can make you crave a cigarette.

### **Know your triggers**

If you know your triggers, you have a head start on avoiding situations that tempt you to smoke.

Think about what might tempt you to smoke. Put a check next to the triggers on page 9 that apply to you. Many smokers find that all these triggers make them want to smoke. You may only check a few. The point is to recognize all the situations that trigger your craving for a cigarette.

- Waking in the morning
- Drinking coffee, tea, or alcohol
- Smelling a cigarette
- Being with other smokers
- Seeing someone smoke
- Taking a break
- Talking on the phone
- Checking email
- Surfing the Internet
- Watching TV
- Driving my car
- Being a passenger
- After eating
- After having sex
- After completing a task
- Feeling stressed
- Feeling lonely or depressed
- Being or feeling less tolerant
- Feeling bored
- Feeling angry, irritable, or impatient

### Meet your triggers head on

You can get prepared to quit smoking by thinking of ways to avoid some triggers and creating alternatives for others. You'll find that the urge to smoke only lasts a few minutes. Even if it lasts longer, it will go away, whether or not you smoke. Fighting the urge to smoke is easier if you:

- ◆ take a deep breath
- ◆ keep your hands busy—write, doodle, or hold a coin or pencil
- ◆ put something else in your mouth, such as a toothpick, sugar-free lollipop, or celery stick
- ◆ go places where smoking isn't allowed, such as a library or nonsmoking restaurant
- ◆ hang out with people who don't smoke
- ◆ avoid or reduce alcoholic drinks; try to drink water or juice instead

*I will deal with my triggers by*

---



---



---



---



---



---



---





## Know your options for quitting smoking

Quitting is hard. Success partly depends on how much you depend on nicotine. With many quit methods to choose from, be aware that no single approach works best for everyone. And you may need to try more than one method before you quit for good.

Some quit methods require a doctor's prescription. While others do not, it's always a good idea to discuss your plan to quit smoking with your doctor. Check the box of the options you want to talk about with your doctor.

### Cold turkey

For some smokers, “going cold turkey” seems like the easiest way to quit: Just stop smoking and tell yourself you'll never light up again. This works for some smokers—usually those with the lowest level of nicotine dependence—but not many. Fewer than 5 percent of smokers can quit this way. Most people aren't prepared when smoking habits and withdrawal symptoms trigger an intense urge to smoke. Research shows that most smokers have more success with one of the assisted quit methods discussed below. These methods have been tested and all of them are included in the U.S. Public Health Service guidelines for treating tobacco use and dependence.

### Over-the-counter medications

You don't need a prescription to buy certain medications that can improve your success with quitting. Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products—lozenges, gum, or a patch—provide nicotine to help reduce your craving for nicotine and withdrawal symptoms, if any. This allows you to focus on changing the behavior and habits that trigger your urge to smoke. To read more about NRT, see page 18.



## KEEP IN MIND

### ❑ Prescription medications

Your doctor can prescribe medications to help you quit smoking. Some—inhalers and nasal sprays—act much like nonprescription nicotine replacement therapy. Other medications do not contain nicotine and work in different ways to help reduce your urge to smoke. To read more about prescription medications, see page 18.

### ❑ Counseling and group support

Many smokers quit with support provided by individual counseling or group treatment. You can combine these therapies with over-the-counter or prescription medications. Counseling can help you identify and overcome situations that trigger the urge to smoke. Research shows that success rates for all quit methods are higher when they are combined with a support program that provides encouragement through regularly scheduled one-on-one or group meetings, or quitlines.

### ❑ Quitlines

Quitlines are free, telephone-based counseling programs that are available nationwide. When you call a quitline, you are teamed with a trained counselor who can help you develop a strategy for quitting or help you stay on the program you have chosen. The counselor often provides material that can improve your chances of quitting. You can call the National Cancer Institute's Smoking Quitline at 1-877-44U-Quit (1-877-448-7848) or the National Quitline at 1-800-QUITNOW (1-800-784-8669). These are national quitlines that can help you anywhere in the United States.

Not everyone has feelings of withdrawal, but many smokers do. You may experience one or many symptoms of withdrawal and they may last for different periods of time.

Common feelings of smoking withdrawal include:

- ◆ feeling down, blue, or depressed
- ◆ feeling anxious, nervous, or restless
- ◆ having trouble thinking clearly
- ◆ being unable to sleep
- ◆ feeling tired or run down
- ◆ feeling hungry or gaining weight



# S Now Let's START

## S START et a quit date

Finding a time to quit isn't easy. Any time can be a good time to quit when you are ready to try. Some smokers like to pick a day that is meaningful to them, such as:

- ◆ a birthday or wedding anniversary
- ◆ the first day of vacation
- ◆ New Year's Day (January 1)
- ◆ Independence Day (July 4)
- ◆ World No Tobacco Day (May 31)
- ◆ The Great American Smokeout (the third Thursday of each November)

It doesn't have to be a special day to quit. For many people, today is the day. You can choose any day to be your quit day. When you are ready to take the first step toward quitting, take it.

### KEEP IN MIND

Some smokers find it difficult to quit at certain times—after a bad day or personal loss, during a crisis, or at a stressful time, such as a divorce. Examine how you view such times in your life. Can you afford to wait before setting your quit date?



*My quit date is*

### START: Five important steps toward quitting for good

**S** Set a quit date

**T** Tell family, friends, and coworkers you plan to quit

**A** Anticipate and plan for the challenges you will face while quitting

**R** Remove cigarettes and other tobacco products from your home, car, and workplace

**T** Talk to your doctor about getting help to quit





## **START** Anticipate and plan for the challenges you will face while quitting

Expecting challenges is an important part of getting ready to quit. Quitting presents both short- and long-term challenges. You may need different strategies for handling each.

### **Short-term challenges**

Most people who have a hard time quitting and resume smoking do so in the first 3 months after trying to quit. Difficulty quitting is often caused by withdrawal symptoms—the physical discomfort smokers feel when they give up nicotine. It is your body’s way of telling you it is learning to be nicotine-free. These feelings will go away in time.

### **Long-term challenges**

Even as your physical withdrawal is decreasing, you may still be tempted to smoke when you feel stressed or down. Although it’s a challenge to be ready for these times, knowing that certain feelings can trigger a craving to smoke will help you handle the tough times.

### **Smoking journal**

To understand your short- and long-term challenges, start by examining your smoking habits. Keeping a smoking journal can help you track how many cigarettes you smoke a day and what you are doing when you light up.

Check for patterns in your smoking. You may find triggers you aren’t even aware of. Perhaps cigarettes you smoke at certain times or circumstances mean different things to you. Some may be more important than others. Understanding what tempts you to smoke in the short and long term will help you control the urge to smoke before it hits.



You can copy the journal in this booklet or make your own. Keep your journal with you so you can easily use it. Be sure to record the time you smoke, where you are, what you are doing, and what you are thinking or feeling. Rate how much you want the cigarette each time you smoke.

Try this activity for at least a few days, making sure to record 1 day during the week and 1 day on the weekend. You may even find that the time you take to complete the journal helps you smoke less.

- 0 → None
- 1 → Just a little
- 2 → Some
- 3 → A lot

### My Smoking Journal

Cigarette Number	Time of Day	Craving Level	Activity	Who I Was With	Mood
Example	10:45	3	At work	Alone	Stressed
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					



# START

Remove cigarettes and other tobacco products from your home, car, and workplace

## KEEP IN MIND

All forms of tobacco are harmful.

Tobacco products and delivery methods come in many forms. However tobacco is packaged or delivered, it causes disease and addiction. Light or low-tar cigarettes are just as harmful as regular cigarettes.

Clear your home, car, and workplace of all forms of tobacco.

Getting rid of things that remind you of smoking also will help you get ready to quit. You should:

- ◆ Throw away all your tobacco supplies (cigarettes, lighters, matches, and ashtrays). Don't forget to check your drawers, coats, and bags.
- ◆ Make things clean and fresh in your home and car and at work; for instance, clean your drapes, carpets, and clothes.
- ◆ Have your teeth cleaned and remove those nicotine stains.

Don't save the "just in case" pack of cigarettes! Saving one pack just makes it easier to start smoking again.

---

*I can remove reminders of smoking by*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---





## **STAR**Talk to your doctor about getting help to quit

It is important to tell your doctor when you are ready to quit—especially if you are pregnant, thinking of becoming pregnant, or have a serious medical condition. Your doctor can help you connect with the right resources to make your quit attempt successful. Remember—quitting “cold turkey” isn’t your only choice.

Make sure to let your doctor or pharmacist know what medications you are taking. Nicotine changes how some drugs work. Your doctor may need to adjust some of your medications after you quit.

You can learn more about medications before you see your doctor from the summaries below and the up-to-date medication guide at [www.smokefree.gov/quit-smoking/medicationguide](http://www.smokefree.gov/quit-smoking/medicationguide).

### **Medications to help you quit**

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved nicotine and non-nicotine cessation products to reduce withdrawal symptoms and the urge to smoke. Studies show that these medications, compared with trying to quit without them, can double or triple your chances of quitting for good. You will get the most benefit from these medications when you follow the instructions completely. You should not use any product that has not been tested and approved by the FDA.



## KEEP IN MIND

Medications alone can't do all the work. They can help with cravings and withdrawal, but they won't completely prevent withdrawal symptoms. Even if you use medication to help you stop smoking, quitting may still be hard at times.

Many people find it helps to combine medication with behavior strategies. For example, you can keep healthy snacks handy to beat cravings, limit time with smokers, and enroll in a smoking cessation program.

## Nicotine cessation products

Nicotine cessation products—also called nicotine replacement therapy (NRT)—contain small amounts of nicotine but not the hundreds of other harmful chemicals found in cigarettes. NRT helps you handle the physical symptoms of quitting by providing nicotine at much lower levels than found in cigarettes. This satisfies your nicotine craving and lessens your urge to smoke. Over-the-counter NRT options include a patch, gum, or lozenges that contain nicotine. Nicotine inhalers and nasal sprays are available only by prescription.

## Non-nicotine cessation products

Some products that help withdrawal symptoms and nicotine cravings don't contain nicotine. They help by reducing symptoms and smoking urges. A prescription is needed for these medications. See your physician to discuss the details of your medication plan and to get a prescription.

---

*My next doctor's appointment is*

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_

Review what you have done so far to prepare yourself to quit smoking successfully.

My reasons to quit are

---

---

---

---

---

My nicotine addiction test score is \_\_\_\_\_

**My triggers**

- Waking in the morning
- Drinking coffee, tea, or alcohol
- Smelling a cigarette
- Being with other smokers
- Seeing someone smoke
- Taking a break
- Talking on the phone
- Checking email
- Surfing the Internet
- Watching TV
- Driving my car
- Being a passenger
- After eating
- After having sex
- After completing a task
- Feeling stressed
- Feeling lonely or depressed
- Being or feeling less tolerant
- Feeling bored
- Feeling angry, irritable, or impatient

I will deal with my triggers by

---

---

---

---

---

## My Quitting Worksheet

The quit method I'm interested in

- Cold turkey
- Over-the-counter medication (gum, patch, lozenges)
- Prescription medication (inhaler, nasal spray)
- Counseling and group support
- Quitlines

My quit date is \_\_\_\_\_

The family, friends, and coworkers I want to tell are

---

---

---

---

---

---

I can remove reminders of smoking by

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

*My next doctor's appointment is*

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_



## Today's the **B**ig Day—Your Quit Date

So today is the big day—your quit date. Quitting is not easy, so to help you get through your first smoke-free days, we suggest that you:

- ◆ keep busy and find new things to do
- ◆ stay away from what tempts you
- ◆ plan to reward yourself

### Keep busy and find new things to do

Keep busy today, spending as much time as you can in nonsmoking places. Create some new habits and mix up your daily routine. Today and the days ahead will be easier if you avoid things that remind you of smoking. Remember—it's harder to smoke if you are keeping yourself busy and finding new things to do. Here are some examples to get you started.

#### Go to nonsmoking places

- ◆ gyms
- ◆ libraries
- ◆ malls
- ◆ museums
- ◆ places of worship
- ◆ smoke-free restaurants

#### Be active

- ◆ walk or run
- ◆ take a bike ride
- ◆ go for a swim
- ◆ shoot hoops
- ◆ try a yoga class





### **Distract your hands**

- ◆ hold something—a tennis ball, pen, or coin
- ◆ squeeze Silly Putty®
- ◆ knit or crochet
- ◆ write a letter

### **Drink the right stuff**

- ◆ avoid alcoholic drinks
- ◆ drink a lot of water and low-sugar fruit juice
- ◆ replace coffee or tea with a new healthy beverage

### **Distract your mind**

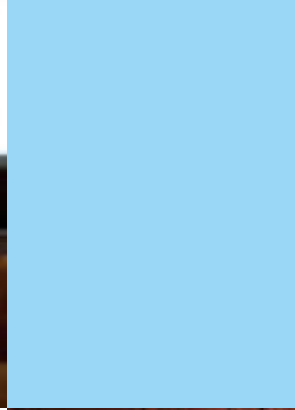
- ◆ do a crossword puzzle
- ◆ read a book
- ◆ play cards

### **Fool your mouth**

- ◆ try a toothpick or straw
- ◆ eat a lollipop
- ◆ chew sugar-free gum
- ◆ eat carrot or celery sticks
- ◆ brush your teeth often and use mouthwash

You may have a hard time concentrating in your early days as a nonsmoker. Mental activities, such as doing crossword puzzles or even reading a book or magazine, may be more challenging. Recognize that it may be difficult to stay mentally focused in the early stages of quitting. Remember—your skill in these activities will return.





## Stay away from what tempts you

You now understand that certain things trigger your urge to smoke. Today and as you're trying to quit, review your list of triggers. Then think of how you can avoid them. Other helpful tips to avoid triggers are noted below.

### Change your routine

Changes in your routine help you avoid times and places that trigger the urge to smoke. Do things and go places where smoking is not allowed. Keep this up until you feel more relaxed and confident about being smoke-free.



Instead of smoking...	Try...
after meals	getting up from the table, brushing and flossing your teeth, and taking a walk.
while driving	listening to a new radio station, trying a different route, or taking a train, carpool, or bus, if possible.
while drinking coffee	switching to water, juice, or tea. Or, change the time you drink your coffee.
at a party	standing with nonsmokers and keeping your hands busy.





### When you really crave a cigarette

Remember—the urge to smoke usually lasts only a few minutes. Try to wait it out. One reason it’s important to get rid of all your cigarettes is to give yourself the time you need for these cravings to fade. Drink water or do something else until the urge passes. Look at the plan you made when you were getting ready to quit. You wrote down steps to take at a time like this. Try them! You also can use any of the tips below.

Tips	Examples
Pick up something other than a cigarette.	Try carrot or celery sticks, pickles, popsicles, sunflower seeds, apples, raisins, or pretzels.
Have a list of things you can do at a moment’s notice.	Organize your computer files, delete messages from your cell phone, or call a friend to chat.
Take a deep breath.	Take 10 slow, deep breaths and hold the last one. Then breathe out slowly. Relax.
Clean something.	Wash your hands or the dishes, vacuum, or clean out your car.
Make a move.	Go outside or to a different room, or change what you are doing or who you are with.

No matter what, don’t think, “Just one won’t hurt.” It will hurt. It will slow your progress toward your goal of being smoke-free. Remember—trying something to beat the urge is always better than trying nothing. The craving will go away, whether you smoke a cigarette or not.



## Plan to reward yourself

Don't think of it as stopping smoking. Think of it as starting a new, healthier life style. Staying smoke-free is challenging. It takes some time. Be patient. You will begin to feel better. Set up rewards to remind yourself how hard you're working. For example, you could:

- ◆ buy yourself something special to celebrate quitting
- ◆ splurge on a massage or dinner at a new restaurant
- ◆ see a movie or sporting event
- ◆ start a new hobby
- ◆ begin exercising

## My list of rewards

Make your own list of rewards. If they require a purchase, figure out the cost. Then plan for rewards that equal the amount of time you've succeeded in quitting (1 day, 1 week, 1 month, and so on). Put aside cigarette money to save for or buy some of them. You'll be amazed at how fast the money you used to spend on cigarettes adds up and how soon you'll be able to buy your rewards.

You have to be careful with food rewards.

It's a great idea to go out to dinner or have a scoop of ice cream. Just be reasonable. Treat yourself without overeating. Make sure you are really hungry and not just searching for a substitute for a cigarette craving.



*I would like to reward myself by*

---

---

---



Now that you aren't buying cigarettes, you probably have more spending money. For example, if you smoke one pack a day:\*

After...	...You've Saved
1 day	\$5.00
1 week	\$35.00
1 month	\$150.00
1 year	\$1,825.00
10 years	\$18,250.00
20 years	\$36,500.00

\*Prices are based on an average of \$5.00 per pack of cigarettes. The cost of a pack may differ, depending on where they are bought.





## Quitting for **G**ood—You Can Do It!

Beating an addiction to nicotine takes a lot more than just willpower and determination. You should feel great about yourself for making it this far. Now's the time to focus on sticking with it. To continue your success, make sure you:

- ◆ keep your guard up
- ◆ don't get discouraged if you slip
- ◆ stay upbeat
- ◆ focus on a new, healthier lifestyle

### Keep your guard up

Your brain has learned to crave nicotine. Although you have quit, the urge to smoke often hits at the same time as when you smoked. For a long time, you have connected certain people, places, activities, and feelings with smoking a cigarette. Although you have quit, triggers such as drinking coffee or using your cell phone don't just disappear. These triggers may cause you to smoke again.

Be cautious and understand that most of the cravings connected to your triggers should disappear within a few months. But others may last longer. That's why you should never take a puff again, no matter how long it's been since you quit.

Continue to review your smoking journal to see when you might be tempted. Then use the skills you've learned to continue to get through your urges without smoking.



## Don't get discouraged if you slip

Don't be discouraged if you slip and smoke one or two cigarettes. It's not a lost cause. One cigarette is better than an empty pack. But that doesn't mean you can safely smoke every now and then, no matter how long ago you quit. One cigarette may seem harmless, but it can quickly lead back to your old smoking habits.

Many ex-smokers tried stopping many times before finally succeeding. When people slip, it's usually within the first few months after quitting, when resisting the urge to smoke can be especially challenging. If you do slip, here are some strategies that can help you get back on track.

### Realize you slipped

Acknowledge that you slipped. You've had a small setback. This doesn't make you a smoker again. Feel good about all the time you went without smoking. Focus on strengthening your coping skills.

### Don't be too hard on yourself

One slip doesn't make you a failure. It doesn't mean you can't quit for good. But don't be too easy on yourself, either. If you slip, don't say, "Well, I've blown it. I might as well smoke the rest of this pack." It's important to get back on the nonsmoking track right away. Remember, your goal is no cigarettes—not even one puff.



## Understand why you slipped

Find the trigger. Exactly what was it that made you smoke? Be aware of that trigger. If you are using medication to help you quit, don't assume that it isn't working if you slip and have a cigarette or two. Stay with it. It will help you get back on track.

## Learn from your experience

What has helped you the most to keep from smoking? Make sure to do that on your next try. If you need to visit your doctor or other health professional again, do so. He or she can help motivate you to continue your effort to quit. Talk to your family and friends. It's okay to ask for support.

Know and use the tips in this booklet. People with even one coping skill are more likely to stay ex-smokers than those who don't know any. **START** to stop again! It's never too late to try.

## Stay upbeat

As you go through the first days and weeks without smoking, stay positive. Don't blame yourself if you slip and smoke a cigarette. Don't think of smoking as "all or nothing." Take it one day at a time.

Remember—you didn't learn to smoke overnight. You may have taken months or even longer to adjust your routines to smoking. Quitting is a learning process, too. Staying positive will help you choose new activities and patterns to replace old habits.





## Focus on a new, healthier lifestyle

### Watch your weight

Many ex-smokers gain some weight because food tastes and smells better after quitting. You may notice that you snack more as a way to cope with the stress of quitting. Because your body uses food more slowly when you first stop smoking, you may gain weight.

If you're worried about gaining weight, remember that the benefits from quitting far outweigh the initial possibility of a few extra pounds. And by being aware of possible weight gain, you can do something about it. Get in shape and eat regular, nutritious meals to prevent unhealthy weight gain. Talk to your doctor or a nutritionist about meals and snacks with healthy amounts of protein, fruits, and vegetables. Also, check the suggestions below.

### Get in shape

Exercise is a great distraction from smoking. It lowers the stress and reduces the cravings that make you want a cigarette. Try to make time to be physically active every day. Experts recommend:

- ◆ 30 minutes a day of moderate physical activity for at least 5 days a week, or
- ◆ at least 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity at least 3 days a week

Keep in mind most physical activities will help you burn calories and control weight gain. When you talk to your doctor about quitting, ask about exercises or activities that can get you back on the road to being fit. Find activities you like to do and that will fit into your schedule. You can also add activity to your day by walking during lunch, taking the stairs,





parking farther away from your destination, or stretching during breaks. Possible activities include:

- ◆ walking or running
- ◆ dancing
- ◆ martial arts
- ◆ yoga
- ◆ tennis
- ◆ basketball
- ◆ aerobics
- ◆ cycling



## Eat healthy foods

Don't stress over your eating patterns. Just try to make healthy food choices as you begin to increase your exercise. Any small changes will help. Here are some tips to get you started today:

- ◆ replace high-calorie foods with healthy, low-calorie ones, such as fresh fruits, vegetables, juices, yogurt, or air-popped popcorn without butter
- ◆ eat sugar-free candy or juice pops, or chew sugar-free gum
- ◆ choose foods that take longer to eat and keep your hands busy, such as oranges or sunflower seeds
- ◆ try crunchy foods, such as pretzels and rice cakes, so your mouth has to work
- ◆ drink water before and between meals.

If you need to have something sweet on occasion, choose foods that taste sweet but have reduced fat and sugar, such as low-fat frozen yogurt.

For more information on how to eat healthy foods, talk to your doctor or nutritionist. Remember to be patient. It takes time to get good at eating healthily and staying smoke-free!



Remember

## The Long-Term Rewards

Tobacco use in the United States causes more than 440,000 deaths each year. Of those deaths, 170,000 are from cancer.

Once you quit smoking, you will add healthy days and years to your life. And you will significantly lower your risk of death from lung cancer and other diseases, including:

- ◆ heart disease
- ◆ stroke
- ◆ emphysema
- ◆ cervical cancer
- ◆ kidney cancer
- ◆ acute myeloid leukemia
- ◆ pancreatic cancer
- ◆ stomach cancer
- ◆ bladder cancer
- ◆ esophageal cancer
- ◆ laryngeal cancer
- ◆ oral cancer
- ◆ throat cancer

The health of your loved ones also will benefit from your quitting—they'll no longer be exposed to dangerous secondhand smoke. Finally, by quitting smoking, you're setting a good example. You're showing others, especially young people, that a life without cigarettes is a longer, healthier, happier life.

Within 20 minutes of smoking that last cigarette, your body starts making healthy changes that will continue for years. You can look forward to the following dramatic changes the moment you become an ex-smoker.



### *20 minutes after quitting*

Your heart rate drops.

### *12 hours after quitting*

The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.

### *2 weeks to 3 months after quitting*

Your heart attack risk begins to drop. Your lung function begins to improve.

### *1 to 9 months after quitting*

Your coughing and shortness of breath decrease.

### *1 year after quitting*

Your added risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's.

### *5 years after quitting*

Your stroke risk is reduced to that of a nonsmoker's 5–15 years after quitting.

### *10 years after quitting*

Your lung cancer death rate is about half that of a smoker's.

### *15 years after quitting*

Your risk of coronary heart disease is back to that of a nonsmoker's.

---

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Smoking: What It Means to You*. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2004.

*Congratulations!*



For More

Information

## National Cancer Institute

◆ [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) website provides two key tools to help you quit smoking: *LiveHelp*, an online text messaging service, and the toll-free number to NCI's Smoking Quitline. *LiveHelp* offers you live, online assistance from information specialists who provide cancer information and can help you navigate the NCI website. Click on the *LiveHelp* link, Monday through Friday.

NCI's Smoking Quitline also is staffed by specialists who can help you quit smoking. Call 1-877-44U-Quit (1-877-448-7848), Monday through Friday.

## Cancer Information Service

◆ <http://cis.nci.nih.gov>

NCI's Cancer Information Service provides accurate, up-to-date information on cancer. Information specialists can help you quit smoking and explain the latest cancer information in easy-to-understand English or Spanish. Call 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237); TTY, 1-800-332-8615.



## American Cancer Society

◆ [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

The American Cancer Society (ACS) has volunteers and offices all over the country. ACS can help you learn about the health hazards of smoking and how to become an ex-smoker. Its programs include the Great American Smokeout each November. ACS also has many booklets and other information to help you quit. Check online or call 1-800-ACS-2345 (1-800-227-2345) to find your local office or for more information.

## American Heart Association

◆ [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

The American Heart Association (AHA) has thousands of volunteers and 130,000 members—doctors, scientists, and others—in 55 state and regional groups. AHA offers books, tapes, and videos on how smoking affects the heart. It also has a guidebook on weight control in quit-smoking programs. Check online or call 1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721) to find your local office or for more information.

## American Legacy Foundation

◆ [www.americanlegacy.org](http://www.americanlegacy.org)

The American Legacy Foundation® develops programs that address the health effects of tobacco use. Through grants, training, partnerships, and grassroots marketing, the Foundation aims to help young people reject tobacco and give everyone access to tobacco prevention and cessation services. Vulnerable populations are a key focus. Check online for more information.



## American Lung Association

◆ [www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org)

The American Lung Association (ALA) helps smokers who want to quit through its Freedom From Smoking<sup>®</sup> self-help quit-smoking program. ALA actively supports laws and information campaigns for nonsmokers' rights. It also provides public information programs on the health effects of smoking. Check online or call 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872) to find your local office or for more information.

## Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

◆ [www.cdc.gov/tobacco/osh/](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/osh/)

The Office on Smoking and Health, a program office within the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), funds booklets on smoking topics such as relapse, helping a friend or family member quit smoking, the health hazards of smoking, and the effects of parental smoking on teenagers. Check online or call 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) for more information.









NATIONAL  
CANCER  
INSTITUTE

NIH Publication No. 08-1647  
Printed October 2008

