

Smoking Facts and Tips for Quitting

Facts about smoking

Hurting yourself

- Smoking is an addiction. Tobacco smoke contains nicotine, a drug that is addictive and can make it very hard, but not impossible to quit.
- Smoking is the biggest preventable cause of death in the industrialized world, and causes more than 400,000 deaths yearly in the U.S. alone. Smoking greatly increases your risks for lung cancer, many other cancers, heart disease, and stroke. It also causes objectionable breath odor and erectile dysfunction.

Hurting Others

- Smoking harms not just the smoker, but also family members, coworkers and others who breathe the smoker's cigarette smoke, called secondhand smoke.
- Among infants to 18 months of age, secondhand smoke is associated with as many as 300,000 cases of bronchitis and pneumonia each year.
- Secondhand smoke from a parent's cigarette increases a child's chances for middle ear problems, causes coughing and wheezing, and worsens asthma conditions.
- If both parents, a teenager is more than twice as likely to smoke than a young person whose parents are both non-smokers. In households where only one parent smokes, young people are also more likely to start smoking.
- Pregnant women who smoke are more likely to deliver babies whose weights are too low for the babies' good health. If all women quit smoking during pregnancy, about 4,000 new babies would not die each year.

Why Quit?

- Quitting smoking makes a difference right away - you can taste and smell food better. Your breath smells better. Your cough goes away. This happens for men and women of all ages, even those who are older. It happens for healthy people as well as those who already have a disease or condition caused by smoking.
- Quitting smoking cuts the risk of lung cancer, many other cancers, heart disease, stroke, other lung diseases, and other respiratory illnesses.
- Ex-smokers have better health than current smokers. Ex-smokers have fewer days of illness, fewer health complaints, and less bronchitis and pneumonia than current smokers.
- Quitting smoking saves money. A pack-a-day smoker, who pays \$2 per pack can, expect to save more than \$700 per year. It appears that the price of cigarettes will continue to rise in coming years, as will the financial rewards of quitting.

Quitting Tips

Getting ready to quit:

- Set a date for quitting. If possible, have a friend quit smoking with you.
- Notice when and why you smoke. Try to find the things in your daily life that you often do while smoking (such as drinking your morning cup of coffee or driving a car).
- Change your smoking routines: Keep your cigarettes in a different place. Smoke with your other hand. Don't do anything else when smoking. Think about how you feel when you smoke.
- Smoke only in certain places, such as outdoors.
- When you want a cigarette, wait a few minutes. Try to think of something to do instead of smoking; you might chew gum or drink a glass of water.
- Buy one pack of cigarettes at a time. Switch to a brand of cigarettes you don't like.
- Decrease the number of cigarettes you smoke a day by at least one half.

On the day you quit:

- Get rid of all your cigarettes. Put away your ashtrays.
- Change your morning routine. When you eat breakfast, don't sit in the same place at the kitchen table. Stay busy.
- When you get the urge to smoke, do something else instead.
- Carry other things to put in your mouth, such as gum, hard candy, or a toothpick.
- Reward yourself at the end of the day for not smoking. See a movie or go out and enjoy your favorite meal.

Staying quit:

- Don't worry if you are sleepier or more short-tempered than usual; these feelings will pass, usually within a few days to one week.
- Try to exercise -- take walks or ride a bike.
- Consider the positive things about quitting, such as how much you like yourself as a non-smoker, health benefits for you and your family, and the example you set for others around you. A positive attitude will help you through the tough times.
- When you feel tense, try to keep busy, think about ways to solve the problem, tell yourself that smoking won't make it any better, and go do something else.
- Eat regular meals. Feeling hungry is sometimes mistaken for the desire to smoke.
- Start a money jar with the money you save by not buying cigarettes.
- Let others know that you have quit smoking -- most people will support you. Many of your smoking friends may want to know how you quit. It's good to talk to others about your quitting.
- If you slip and smoke, don't be discouraged. Many former smokers tried to stop several times before they finally succeeded. Quit again.

If you need more help, see your doctor.

He or she may prescribe Wellbutrin (Zyban) or nicotine replacement or both to help you break your addiction to cigarettes.

For more information about quitting, call

1-800-4-CANCER, the National Cancer Institute's toll-free Cancer Information Service, or 1-800-ACS-2345, the American Cancer Society's Cancer Response System, or look in your local phone directory for smoking cessation resources that may be available in your area, such as local chapters of the American Cancer Society, American Lung Association, American Heart Association, or state and local health departments.

Check our website: www.uhs.berkeley.edu to learn more about this medical concern or others.

For an appointment www.uhs.berkeley.edu or call **510-642-2000**

Clinic Nurse **510-643-7197** for advice