

STOP Smoking

A Practical Approach



How can I stop smoking?

Get ready.

Set a stop date 2 to 4 weeks from now so you'll have time to get ready. Write down your personal reasons for stopping. Be specific. Keep your list with you so you can look at it when you feel the urge to smoke. To help you understand your smoking habit, keep a diary of when and why you smoke. Just before your stop date, get rid of all of your cigarettes, matches, lighters and ashtrays.

Get support and encouragement.

Tell your family and friends what kind of help you need. Their support will make it easier for you to stop smoking. Also, ask your family doctor to help you develop a plan for stopping smoking. Your doctor can also recommend a stop-smoking program. These programs are often held at local hospitals or health centers. Give yourself rewards for stopping smoking. For example, with the money you save by not smoking, buy yourself something special.

Learn how to handle stress and the urge to smoke.

You may have a habit of using cigarettes to relax during stressful times. Luckily, there are good ways to manage stress without smoking. Relax by taking a hot bath, going for a walk, or breathing slowly and deeply. Think of changes in your daily routine that will help you resist the urge to smoke.

What will happen when I stop smoking?

How you feel when you stop depends on how much you smoked, how addicted your body is to nicotine and how well you get ready to stop smoking. You may crave a cigarette or feel hungrier than usual. You may feel edgy and have trouble concentrating. You also may

cough more at first, and you may have headaches. These things happen because your body is used to nicotine. They are called nicotine withdrawal symptoms. The symptoms are strongest during the first few days after you stop smoking, but most go away within a few weeks.

What about nicotine replacement products or medicine to help me stop smoking?

Nicotine replacement products are ways to take in nicotine without smoking. Nicotine replacement works by lessening your body's craving for nicotine and reducing withdrawal symptoms. This lets you focus on the changes you need to make in your habits and environment. Once you feel more confident as a non-smoker, dealing with your nicotine addiction is easier. Prescription medicines help some people stop smoking. These medicines do not contain nicotine, but help you resist your urges to smoke.

Will I gain weight when I stop smoking?

Most people gain a few pounds after they stop smoking. Remember that any weight gain is a minor health risk compared to the risks of smoking. Dieting while you're trying to stop smoking will cause unnecessary stress. Instead, limit your weight gain by having healthy, low-fat snacks on hand and being physically active.



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Immediate rewards of quitting

- Your breath smells better
- Stained teeth get whiter
- Bad smelling clothes and hair go away
- Yellow fingers and fingernails disappear
- Food tastes better
- Sense of smell returns to normal

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Smoking Cessation
appointment today!

703-481-1505

How your body reacts after stopping smoking:

20 minutes: Your heart rate and blood pressure drops

12 hours: The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal

2 weeks - 3 months: Your circulation improves and your lung function increases

1 - 9 months: Coughing and shortness of breath decrease; cilia (tiny hair-like structures that move mucus out of the lungs) regain normal function in the lungs, increasing the ability to handle mucus, clean the lungs, and reduce the risk of infection.

1 year: The excess risk of coronary heart disease is 50% that of a smoker's.

5 years: Your stroke risk is reduced to that of a non-smoker 5 to 15 years after quitting.

10 years: The lung cancer death rate is about half that of a person who continues smoking. The risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, cervix, and pancreas decrease, also.

15 years: The risk of coronary heart disease is the same as a non-smoker's.

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The Cost of Smoking

The prospect of better health is a major reason for quitting, but there are other reasons, too. Smoking is expensive. It isn't hard to figure out how much you spend on smoking: multiply how much money you spend on tobacco every day by 365 (days per year). The amount may surprise you. Now multiply that by the number of years you have been using tobacco and that amount will probably shock you. Multiply the cost per year by 10 (for the next 10 years) and ask yourself what you would rather do with that much money. And this doesn't include other possible costs, such as higher costs for health and life insurance, and likely health care costs due to tobacco-related problems.

