

How Smoking Affects Peripheral Artery Disease and How to Quit Tobacco Use

Peripheral Artery Disease

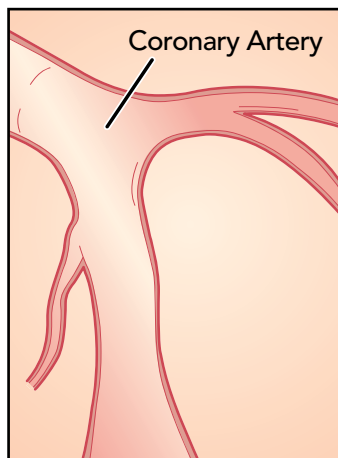
Cholesterol and plaque (fatty deposits) collect on the insides of your blood vessel walls. This most often occurs in your legs. If the fatty build-up keeps collecting, your blood flow will be reduced. This is known as peripheral artery disease, often called PAD.

Atherosclerosis happens when the fatty deposits harden and narrow arteries.

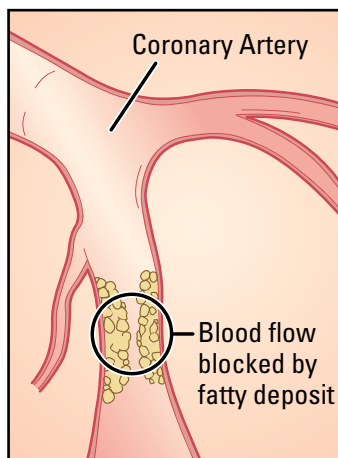
Blocked blood flow to your legs can cause aches, pains, cramps, numbness or muscle fatigue when you walk or exercise. You may also have leg pain at night.

Over time, PAD limits oxygen-rich blood to your body.

It can affect the arteries that carry blood from your heart to the rest of your body. This puts you at risk for heart disease, heart attack and stroke.



Drawings © Allina Health System



(Top) A normal artery.
(Below) An artery blocked by plaque.

How Tobacco Affects Your Body

Smoking is the main risk for PAD. Tobacco use is especially dangerous to your blood vessels and arteries. Tobacco:

- damages and narrows your blood vessels
 - This can lead to infections and risk for stroke.
- increases blood pressure
 - This can lead to stroke or heart disease.
- makes your blood vessels and arteries sticky, which can block blood flow
 - This raises your risks for heart disease, kidney disease, eye disease that causes blindness, and nerve damage.

Smokeless tobacco affects your heart in much the same way as cigarettes. Changing to smokeless tobacco is not a good way to protect your health. The best thing to do for your heart health is to quit all tobacco products.

Benefits of Quitting for Your Heart

- Your body responds quickly to quitting:
 - **8 hours:** The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal. The oxygen level in your blood increases to normal.
 - **24 hours:** Your chance of heart attack decreases.
 - **48 hours:** Nerve endings start to grow again.

(over)

— **2 weeks:** Circulation to your hands and feet improve. Your ability to exercise improves. (Source: World Health Organization.)

■ There are many health benefits to quitting. Quitting:

- lowers your chances of stroke, heart disease and nerve damage
- may lower your blood pressure
- lowers your risk for many cancers.

Suggestions for Quitting Tobacco

Studies show that the most successful way to quit uses counseling, medicines and follow-up. Ask your health care provider for more information.

■ **Prepare to stop.**

- Get support from family and friends.
- Avoid places where you know you will want to use tobacco.
- Plan activities to replace using tobacco.

■ **Choose a day to stop.**

- Get rid of matches, lighters and anything else related to smoking, chewing or vaping

■ **Stop.**

- Stop on the day you planned to stop.
- Be careful with situations or activities in which you might be tempted to start using tobacco again.
- Try to keep your focus on today, not the future. Tell yourself, "I am not smoking today."

■ **Stay stopped.**

- Think positive thoughts. Remember why you decided to stop. Reward yourself.
- Remember that your craving will pass whether you smoke or not.
- Do not play games like telling yourself, "One cigarette won't hurt," "I deserve a dip or chew," "I just want to see how a cigarette tastes." Your brain might tell you these things to persuade you to go back to tobacco.

Not Ready to Quit? Consider Taking a Break!

If quitting tobacco seems like too much right now, consider taking a break or a vacation from tobacco use.

This can help you feel better by restoring balance*.

- Set a goal to stop using tobacco.
- Talk with your doctor for resources or ways to cope with withdrawal symptoms.
- If this goes well, maybe you will take more breaks during the year. This could lead to a tobacco-free life!

*Follow your doctor's directions for medicine, exercise, diet and other activities.

Resources for Quitting

■ **Quit Partner**

- 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or quitpartnermn.com
- American Indian: 1-833-9AI-QUIT or aiquit.com
- Spanish: 1-855-DEJELO-YA (1-855-335-3569) or quitpartnermn.com/es
- asiansmokersquitline.org

■ **online tobacco cessation support**

- smokefree.gov

■ **American Lung Association/Tobacco Quit Line**

- 651-227-8014 or 1-800-586-4872

■ **financial aid Nicotrol® inhaler**

- 1-844-989-PATH (7284)
- pfizerRxpathways.com

■ **Plant Extracts aromatherapy**

- 1-877-999-4236
- plantextractsinc.com

allinahealth.org