

Quitting Tobacco

Quitting is Important

Quitting tobacco is challenging because nicotine — the active ingredient in all tobacco products — is extremely addictive.

Maybe this is your first attempt to quit. Maybe you have been trying to stop using tobacco for a long time; your determination shows how important quitting is to you.

Busting Myths

I don't smoke enough to get the diseases that smoking causes.

Smoking even 1 cigarette a day can:

- increase your risk of heart attack, stroke, high blood pressure and narrowing of major blood vessels
- lower oxygen supply in your bloodstream, causing shortness of breath and lack of oxygen.

Smoking low-tar, low-nicotine, "organic" or rolling my own cigarettes is safer.

All tobacco — even organic — contains toxic and cancer-causing chemicals that are found in the tobacco plant. There is no safe tobacco. Rolling papers contain toxic chemicals as well.

Tobacco relaxes me.

Using tobacco actually increases stress upon your body, by raising your blood pressure and heart rate.

I use smokeless tobacco instead of cigarettes because it's a healthier option.

Smokeless tobacco is not healthier. It causes some of the same risks as cigarettes. Smokeless tobacco can also cause cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus, stomach and pancreas.

Switching to an ENDS (electronic nicotine delivery system) or e-cigarette is safe and will help me quit.

According to research, ENDS is not considered safe or effective in helping people quit using tobacco. They contain toxic and cancer-causing chemicals and can cause breathing problems and contribute to lung disease in people who use them. These products are not fully regulated by the U.S. Federal Food and Drug Administration.

I've smoked so long that it won't make any difference if I quit now.

Research has proven that your body benefits from quitting, no matter how long you've been smoking. Your body can even repair some of the damage that has been done. The extra oxygen also helps your body heal faster from injuries or illness.

(over)

Preparing To Quit

- Instead of looking at quitting as success or failure, remember that every effort to quit is another practice at living your life without tobacco.
- The good news is there are many ways to quit. It's important to choose methods that appeal to you.
- Talk with your health care provider about medicines that may help you quit tobacco.
- Track your triggers to get a better idea of what situations, emotions or both make you want to use tobacco.
- Talk with your family, friends or coworkers about how to support you while you quit. Be specific. See if others would like to quit with you.
- Plan your reward for each day you don't smoke. Keep them easy, and affordable. And above all, do them!

Actually Quitting

- Make your home and vehicle a tobacco-free zone. Give yourself a "safe place."
- Change your environment to help reduce cravings.
 - Get rid of all cigarettes and chewing tobacco.
 - Throw away your ashtrays and lighters.
 - If you're having withdrawal symptoms or cravings, try to avoid smoke-filled places and people who use tobacco.
- Make a plan for situations that trigger you to use tobacco.
- Think positively. Believe you can quit. Tell yourself: "I can do this!"
- Get enough rest.
- Take it one day at a time. Any step you take without tobacco is going to help you. Small steps are better than nothing!

- Remember: most cravings last only 3 to 5 minutes ... so wait it out! The craving will go away whether you use tobacco or not!

Medicines to Help You Quit

It is becoming more common that people need medicines to help them quit tobacco. Medicines are proven to be helpful and increase your chance of long-term success.

Talk with your doctor about which way(s) to quit may help you the most.

- Over-the-counter products include nicotine gum, nicotine lozenge and the nicotine patch.
- Prescription products include Chantix™, Zyban®, nicotine nasal spray, nicotine inhaler.

Need Help?

- Tobacco Intervention Program at Abbott Northwestern Hospital
 - 612-863-1648
- Tobacco Intervention Program at Mercy Hospital
 - 763-236-8008
- Tobacco Intervention Program at River Falls Area Hospital
 - 715-307-6075
- *United Hospital Lung and Sleep Clinic Tobacco Cessation Program
 - 651-726-6200
- *Penny George™ Institute for Health and Healing (LiveWell Center) tobacco intervention coaching
 - 612-863-5178
- Minnesota Department of Health
 - health.state.mn.us/quit

***There may be a cost to you. Check with your insurance provider.**