

SMOKING CESSATION

Tobacco use is the most common preventable cause of death. About half of the people who don't quit smoking will die of smoking-related problems. Quitting smoking is important for your health and provides many benefits. Soon after you quit, your circulation begins to improve, and your blood pressure starts to return to normal. Your sense of smell and taste return and breathing starts to become easier.

Quitting is not easy. You may have short-term effects such as weight gain, irritability and anxiety. Your health care provider can help you find the best way for you to quit.



1. What health problems are caused by smoking?

Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body and diminishes a person's overall health. Smoking is a leading cause of cancer and of death from cancer. It causes cancers of the lung, esophagus, larynx, mouth, throat, kidney, bladder, pancreas, stomach, and cervix.

Smoking also causes heart disease, stroke, lung disease (chronic bronchitis and emphysema), and cataracts. Smokers are at higher risk of developing pneumonia and other airway infections.

A pregnant smoker is at higher risk of having her baby born too early and with an abnormally low weight. A woman who smokes during or after pregnancy increases her infant's risk of death from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

2. Does tobacco smoke contain harmful chemicals?

Yes. Tobacco smoke contains chemicals that are harmful to both smokers and nonsmokers. Breathing even a little tobacco smoke can be harmful. Of the 4,000 chemicals in tobacco smoke, at least 250 are known to be harmful. The toxic chemicals found in smoke include hydrogen cyanide (used in chemical weapons), carbon monoxide (found in car exhaust), formaldehyde (used as an embalming fluid), ammonia (used in household cleaners), and toluene (found in paint thinners).

3. What are the immediate benefits of quitting smoking?

The immediate health benefits of quitting smoking are substantial. Heart rate and blood pressure, which were abnormally high while smoking, begin to return to normal. Within a few hours, the level of carbon monoxide in the blood begins to decline. (Carbon monoxide, a colorless, odorless gas found in cigarette smoke, reduces the blood's ability to carry oxygen.) Within a few weeks, people who quit smoking have improved circulation, don't produce as much phlegm, and don't cough or wheeze as often. Within several months of quitting, people can expect significant improvements in lung function.

4. What are the long-term benefits of quitting smoking?

Quitting smoking reduces the risk of cancer and other diseases, such as heart disease and lung disease, caused by smoking. People who quit smoking, regardless of their age, are less likely than those who continue to smoke to die from smoking-related illness.

5. Does quitting smoking lower the risk of cancer?

Quitting smoking substantially reduces the risk of developing and dying from cancer, and this benefit increases the longer a person remains smoke free. The risk of premature death and the chance of developing cancer due to cigarettes depend on the number of years of smoking, the number of cigarettes smoked per day, the age at which smoking began, and the presence or absence of illness at the time of quitting. For people who have already developed cancer, quitting smoking reduces the risk of developing a second cancer.

6. Should someone already diagnosed with cancer bother to quit smoking?

Yes. There are many reasons that people diagnosed with cancer should quit smoking. For those having surgery or other treatments, quitting smoking helps improve the body's ability to heal and respond to the cancer treatment, and it lowers the risk of pneumonia and respiratory failure.

7. What are some of the challenges associated with quitting smoking?

- Feeling sad or anxious: People who quit smoking are likely to feel depressed, anxious, irritable, and restless, and may have difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
- Gaining weight: Increased appetite is a common withdrawal symptom after quitting smoking. Regular physical activity can help people maintain a healthy weight.



Smokers' Early Destination