
Kicking the Smoking Habit

If you smoke, it doubles your risk of heart disease. Quitting is one of the best changes you can make for your heart and your overall health. Your risk of heart attack goes down within one day of putting out that last cigarette. As you go longer without smoking, your risk drops even more. Quitting isn't easy. But millions of people have done it. You can, too. It's never too late to quit.



Getting started

Boost your chances of success by deciding on your quit plan. Your healthcare provider and cardiac rehab team can help you create this plan. Even if you've already quit, it's easy to slip back into smoking. Your plan can help you prevent and recover from relapse. Start by setting a date to quit within a month. And then do it.

Keys to your quit plan

- Talk with your healthcare provider about prescription medicines and nicotine replacement products that help stop the urge to smoke.
- Join a support group or quit-smoking program. Talking with others about the challenges of quitting can help you get through them. For more support options, try www.smokefree.gov.
- Ask other smokers in your home to quit with you.
- Look for the cues in your life that you connect with smoking. Stay away from them.

Track your triggers

What gives you that “I-need-a-cigarette” feeling? List all the situations that make you want a cigarette. Then think of other ways to deal with these situations. Here are some examples:

Situation	How I'll handle it
Finishing a meal	Get up from the table and take a walk.
Having an argument	Find a quiet place and breathe deeply.
Feeling lonely or bored	Call a friend to talk.

Tips for quitting successfully

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- List the benefits of quitting, such as reducing heart risks and saving money. Keep this list and review it whenever you feel like smoking.
 - Get support. Let your friends know you may call them to talk when you have an urge to smoke.
 - If you've tried to quit before without success, this time stay away from the triggers that may cause relapse.
 - Make the most of slip-ups. Try to learn from them, and then get back on track.
 - Be accountable to your friends and your quit calendar so that you stay on track.

For family and friends

- Be supportive and patient. Quitting smoking can be hard and stressful.
- If you smoke, now's a great time to quit. Even if you don't quit, never smoke around your loved one. Exposing others to secondhand smoke increases their risk for heart disease, cancer, and stroke.
- The best goals are reached as a team. Remember that when your loved one says they want to stop smoking.