

TOBACCO



BACKGROUND

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), tobacco causes more deaths each year than deaths from HIV, illegal drug use, alcohol, car crashes, suicide, and murders combined. Even an occasional cigarette while drinking or going out with friends causes damage to your lungs, blood vessels, and cells throughout your body. The good news is that smokers have many options when it comes to quitting.

All forms of tobacco cause cancer and contain nicotine, which is a highly addictive stimulant. Once nicotine is taken into the body, blood sugar rises slightly, giving you increased energy that will soon subside and leave you fatigued and perhaps depressed, fueling the craving for more nicotine. As a vasoconstrictor, nicotine tightens blood vessels and restricts blood flow, causing permanent damage to arteries in the long run.

It takes only seconds for nicotine to reach the brain, but its effects can last for an entire day. Unfortunately, corticosterone, the stress hormone, reduces nicotine's effectiveness. This means that if you're stressed, you will need more nicotine to feel an impact. As you can imagine, the more you use, the higher your tolerance for nicotine, and the more dependent you become on the drug.

When forced to go for a long period without using tobacco, you will probably feel irritated and more aggressive. In addition, whether you notice or not, your cognitive functioning will most likely be impaired. In addition, because both male and female orgasms depend on blood flow, nicotine can affect your sex life.



Health
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QUITTING TOBACCO

Your body will thank you. After smoking your last cigarette:

- 20 minutes: Blood pressure and pulse rate decrease
- 8 hours: Carbon monoxide levels in blood return to normal
- 1 day: The likelihood of a heart attack decreases
- 2 days: Nerve endings regenerate; sense of smell/taste enhanced
- 2 weeks: Circulation improves and lung function increases
- 1-9 months: Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, and shortness of breath decrease
- 1 year: The likelihood of heart attack is cut in half
- 5 years: Stroke risk is reduced to the same levels as a non-smoker
- 10 years: Risk of lung cancer death is half that of a current smoker
- 15 years: Risk of coronary heart disease and death become roughly equivalent to those who have never smoked

GETTING READY TO QUIT

- Know why you are quitting. List the benefits that this change will bring you. Post the list to remind yourself.
- Tell friends who will be supportive. Let them know how to help.
- Know your smoking patterns and make changes as needed.
- Recruit a friend to quit at the same time.
- Get rid of any tobacco products in your room or apartment.
- Plan regular exercise.
- Have low calorie snacks available.
- Collect the money you save and treat yourself to something.

WITHDRAWAL

Tobacco craving typically lasts a maximum of 3 to 5 minutes. You might experience irritability, headaches, nausea, anxiety, restlessness, insomnia, or difficulty concentrating. Many people gain around 5 to 10 pounds, on average.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I SLIP UP?

Forgive yourself. For many people, it takes about 5 to 7 attempts to quit for good, so don't give up. Think about the following questions to help you proceed: Were you prepared to quit? What happened? In what situation did you begin to use tobacco again? What people were with you? What could you have done to avoid it? How can you deal with stress without tobacco?