

# Smoking Cessation Newsletter



## Quit Smoking: Get Back on Track After a Slip-up

It's tough to quit smoking for good. If you slipped up and had a smoke, don't despair. You can use these tips to get back on track.

- **Don't give up.** Learning to be a nonsmoker is like learning to ride a bike: When you fall off, get right back on.
- **Put the slip-up into context.** Just because you had a cigarette doesn't mean you're a smoker again. Anyone can make a mistake.
- **Don't make excuses.** Don't think, "I had one, I might as well finish the pack." Stop now. The goal is no smoking – not even one puff. And you can do it.
- **Give yourself credit for past success.** Remind yourself of the days, weeks or months you went without smoking.
- **Remember why you quit.** Focus on the positive aspects of not smoking. Recommit to quitting.
- **Learn from the experience.** What caused you to slip up? Think of ways you could have avoided smoking. Work on your coping skills so you are prepared next time you are in the same situation.
- **Get support. Call 800-QUIT-NOW** (800-784-8669) for free phone counseling. You'll talk to a trained quit coach in your state who can help you make a plan to avoid future slips.
- **Talk to your doctor if you need more help.** He or she may be able to prescribe medicine, advise you on nicotine replacement products or suggest other tools to help you avoid relapses.

## When a slip-up becomes a relapse

If you do relapse, remember that quitting smoking is a process. Use what you learned about what works and what doesn't. Then when you're ready, you can quit again. And this might be the time you are finally able to quit for good.

## The Dangers of Secondhand Smoke

Environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) is commonly called secondhand smoke. Smoke from the burning end of cigarettes, pipes or cigars and smoke exhaled from smokers contains more than 4,000 substances, more than 40 of which are known to cause cancer in humans and animals. It is classified as a Group A carcinogen by the EPA, a rating used for substances proven to cause cancer in humans. (Group A carcinogens also include radon and asbestos.)

Exposure to secondhand smoke, also called involuntary smoking or passive smoking, is concentrated indoors where ETS is often the most significant pollutant. Indoor levels of the particles you may inhale (the "tars" in the cigarettes) from ETS often exceed the national air quality standard established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for outdoor air.

According to the American Cancer Society, ETS causes about 3,400 lung cancer deaths and about 46,000 deaths from heart disease each year in healthy nonsmokers who live with smokers. Nonsmokers living in the household are also more likely to get asthma and other respiratory problems, eye irritation and headaches.



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## Special risks for infants, children and pregnant women

Infants and young children whose parents smoke are among the most seriously affected by exposure to secondhand smoke. They are more likely to suffer from asthma pneumonia, bronchitis, ear infections, coughing, wheezing, and increased mucus production.

In infants and children under 18 months of age, secondhand smoke is responsible for 150,000 to 300,000 lower respiratory tract infections, according to the American Lung Association (ALA). This results in 7,500 and 15,000 hospitalizations in that age group each year.

Babies living with parents who smoke also have a greater chance of dying of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). The ALA estimates that secondhand smoke causes 1,900 to 2,700 sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) deaths in the U.S. annually.

Pregnant women exposed to passive smoke are more likely to have babies with lower birth weights.

## Minimizing exposure to secondhand smoke

- Don't smoke in your home or permit others to do so.
- If a family member smokes indoors, increase ventilation in the area by opening windows or using exhaust fans.

## Join the Great American Smokeout

Whether you're just thinking about kicking the habit or ready to choose a quit date, there's no better time than now to join the Smokeout.

In 1971, a high school guidance counselor in Massachusetts asked people to quit smoking for one day. He also asked them to donate the money they saved on cigarettes that day to a local college scholarship fund. In time, that small-town event grew into what is now known as the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout. The nationwide event is held the third Thursday every November.

An estimated 443,000 people die each year from smoking. About 38,000 of those who die are nonsmokers who have been exposed to secondhand smoke. If you smoke and have been trying to quit, why not join the Smokeout? It's one of the most successful one-day quit programs in the country. More people quit on this day than any other time of the year – including New Year's Day. You could be one of them.

Cigarettes are highly addictive. They can serve as a major gateway to drug addiction. According to the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, children who smoke cigarettes are eight times more likely to use illegal drugs and abuse alcohol than those who don't smoke. And most adult smokers started before they were 18. Research shows that teens can become addicted to nicotine more quickly than adults.



## Tips for kicking the habit

The American Cancer Society offers Quitline (1-800-227-2345) for those who are trying to stop smoking. Using Quitline can more than double your chances of quitting successfully. Counselors at Quitline can connect you with smoking cessation programs in your community as well as support groups and Internet resources.

If you're ready to quit:

- **Set a date for quitting.** Take one day at a time, and set short-term goals.
- **Tell your family and friends about your plans.** You will need their encouragement when you feel the urge to light up. Having social support is one of the keys to quitting successfully.
- **To avoid temptation,** get rid of all cigarettes, lighters and ashtrays.
- **Talk to your doctor** about using a medication or nicotine replacement therapy as an alternative to quitting "cold turkey."
- **When you first try to quit, change your routine.** If you usually light up during your morning coffee, then eat breakfast in a different place or drink tea instead of coffee.
- **When you quit and still get the urge to smoke, talk with someone, go for a walk, drink water or get busy with a task.** Reduce your stress by taking a hot bath, exercising or reading a book.
- **Lastly, take advantage of the Great American Smokeout.** You'll be surprised at how quickly your body starts to recover when you don't smoke. For instance, 20 minutes after your last cigarette, your blood pressure will go down toward your baseline level and your heart rate will become slower. After 12 hours, the carbon monoxide levels in your lungs will return to normal. And that's just in the first day!

Even if you're not ready to quit just yet, joining the Great American Smokeout will teach you that you can go a day without cigarettes. And maybe even a lifetime.



## If at First You Don't Succeed: How to Quit Smoking for Good

If you've tried to quit before without success, trying again can be daunting. You don't want to set yourself up for disappointment. Most people need a few "practice rounds" before they quit smoking for good, though. In fact, the average smoker tries to quit nine to 11 times before they are successful.

### Some motivation

You know that when you stop smoking your health will improve. Here are some other reasons to quit. You'll:

- **Be better prepared for success this time.** Take the last quit attempt as a learning experience. What worked last time and what didn't? Learn from your mistakes. Maybe you tried quitting when you were very busy at work. Choose a less stressful time to quit this go-round.
- **Save money. Quitting also helps your wallet.** If you smoke one pack of cigarettes a day, you spend about \$150 a month on them. That's \$1,800 each year. Make a list of other ways you can spend the money.
- **Make the people around you healthier.** Secondhand smoke can harm your loved ones. It can cause breathing problems in kids, and lead to cancer and heart disease in adults.

### Why quitting is so hard

Addiction to smoking is two-fold. Not only are you addicted to the nicotine in cigarettes, but you're also addicted to the behavior of smoking.

Nicotine is a drug found in all tobacco products. It may make you feel calm, but alert and focused. Over time, your body gets used to the amount of nicotine you take in, and you need more to achieve that "good" feeling. This is why you probably started off smoking a few cigarettes each day, and now you're smoking a pack each day or more.

The good news is that you can beat your addiction to nicotine. Nicotine replacement therapy products – like the patch or gum – gradually wean your body off nicotine. This will minimize the side effects of nicotine withdrawal. In time, you will not need the drug anymore, and you'll feel normal without it. Ask your doctor if nicotine replacement products are an option for you.

Creating a new habit is one of the hardest things to do. Smoking is a big part of your life, and changing that behavior will not be easy. Many things "trigger" you to reach for a cigarette each day. You may light up when you feel a certain way – happy, sad or stressed – or when you're in a particular situation, such as watching TV or being out with friends.

But, new habits can be formed. Experts say it takes about six months for a new behavior to become a habit. Getting through those first months is the most challenging part. It's common to have setbacks and want to give up. With some careful planning and the right mindset, you can overcome these triggers and be on your way to a smoke-free life.

### For success

You can quit smoking. People who use both nicotine replacement therapy and behavior change techniques double their chances of quitting for good. There are also prescription medicines that help some people quit smoking. Talk to your doctor about a program that fits your needs. Everyone is different. Together you can make a plan that is right for you.





## Common Cigar-Smoking Myths

Do you know the facts about smoking cigars? If you're like many people, you might believe that they're safer than cigarettes. Learn the truth about the dangers of cigar smoking.

Most of us know about the dangers of cigarettes. Unfortunately, when it comes to cigars, many smokers aren't aware of the risks. That's because there are so many myths about cigar smoking.

### Myth: Cigars aren't as harmful as cigarettes.

**Fact:** Smoking cigars can cause some of the same cancers as cigarettes. These include cancers of the lips, tongue, mouth, throat and esophagus. Cigar smoking may also cause cancer of the pancreas. It narrows blood vessels and limits the flow of blood to the heart. This is especially true during exercise and times of stress. Smoking cigars also increases your risks for heart disease and respiratory diseases like emphysema.

### Myth: Most cigar smokers don't inhale, so there's no risk of cancer.

**Fact:** Even if you don't inhale, you are still exposed to cancer-causing ingredients. If you don't inhale, you are still seven to 10 times more likely than nonsmokers to develop cancer of the mouth and throat. You also double your risk for lung cancer, and increase your risk for vocal cord cancer. These risks greatly increase if you inhale.

### Myth: Cigars aren't as addictive as cigarettes.

**Fact:** Because of its size, one cigar can have as much nicotine as several cigarettes. Whether or not you inhale, you still absorb nicotine through the lining of your mouth. Unlike cigarettes, cigars usually don't have filters or tips. This means you absorb nicotine when the cigar comes in contact with your lips – whether or not it's lit.

### Myth: Secondhand cigar smoke isn't as harmful to the environment as cigarette smoke.

**Fact:** Cigar smoke has the same harmful ingredients as cigarette smoke, but at higher levels. They linger in the air much longer than cigarette smoke. It usually takes less than 10 minutes to smoke a cigarette, but an hour or more to smoke a large cigar. Studies show that secondhand smoke increases the risk of cancer, heart attack and heart and lung disease in nonsmokers.

## Help Your Teen Quit Smoking

Smoking can damage young lungs after just a short time. Learn about the science behind smoking damage in teens and the five D's to help your son or daughter quit.

The sooner you help your teenager to quit, the better. Smoking in the teenage years causes dramatic and lifelong DNA damage in the lungs, according to one study. Young smokers could be at a permanently higher risk of developing lung cancer, even if they quit later.

Damage to the body from smoking starts right away. Researchers found that the younger the age one starts to smoke, the more DNA damage occurs. Experts say that DNA changes in the lung tissue occur when chemicals in tobacco smoke fuse with genes in the DNA and cause mutations that can significantly increase the likelihood of cancer.

The American Cancer Society reports that students who smoke are also more likely to use other drugs, get in fights, carry weapons, attempt suicide and engage in high-risk sexual behaviors. These are some serious reasons to quit.

As a parent, you play a pivotal role in helping your teen to quit.

### What you can do to help your teen quit:

- **Set an example.** If you smoke, quit. Kids learn by example. If you already quit, share your experiences with your child. Share with your son or daughter how you were able to quit, even though it was tough. Encourage them to do so in a non-threatening and supportive way.
- **Be a detective.** When talking to your child, find out why he or she is using tobacco. You may learn that your son is under pressure from peers to smoke or that your daughter smokes to relax. Learning about your child's pressures to smoke is a good starting off point for coming up with healthy alternatives.
- **Be there for your teen when he or she quits.** Nicotine withdrawal strikes younger people, too. Share the five D's to help your child through the early days of quitting:
  - **Delay.** Teach that the craving goes away eventually.
  - **Deep breath.** Tell your child to take a few calming deep breaths.
  - **Drink water.** Advise your teen to drink water, which flushes out the nicotine (addictive chemical)
  - **Do something else.** Help your teen find an activity he or she enjoys.
  - **Discuss.** Have your teen talk about his or her thoughts and feelings.