



Prevention and Early Detection

When Smokers Quit—The Health Benefits Over Time

20 minutes after quitting: Your heart rate and blood pressure drops. ("Effect of Smoking on Arterial Stiffness and Pulse Pressure Amplification", Mahmud, A, Feely, J. 2003. *Hypertension*:41:183.)

12 hours after quitting: The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal. (US Surgeon General's Report, 1988 , p. 202)

2 weeks to 3 months after quitting: Your circulation improves and your lung function increases. (US Surgeon General's Report, 1990, pp.193, 194,196, 285, 323)

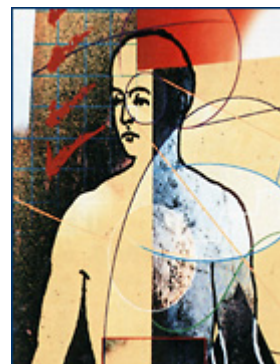
1 to 9 months after quitting: Coughing and shortness of breath decrease; cilia (tiny hair-like structures that move mucus out of the lungs) regain normal function in the lungs, increasing the ability to handle mucus, clean the lungs, and reduce the risk of infection. (US Surgeon General's Report, 1990, pp. 285-287, 304)

1 year after quitting: The excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's. (US Surgeon General's Report, 1990, p. vi)

5 years after quitting: Your stroke risk is reduced to that of a nonsmoker 5 to 15 years after quitting. (US Surgeon General's Report, 1990, p. vi)

10 years after quitting: The lung cancer death rate is about half that of a continuing smoker's. The risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, cervix, and pancreas decrease. (US Surgeon General's Report, 1990, pp. vi, 131, 148, 152, 155, 164,166)

15 years after quitting: The risk of coronary heart disease is that of a nonsmoker's. (US Surgeon General's Report, 1990, p. vi)





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Secondhand Smoke

What Is It?

Secondhand smoke, also known as environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) or passive smoke, is a mixture of 2 forms of smoke from burning tobacco products:

- **Sidestream smoke:** smoke that comes from the end of a lighted cigarette, pipe, or cigar
- **Mainstream smoke:** smoke that is exhaled by a smoker

When nonsmokers are exposed to secondhand smoke it is called *involuntary smoking* or passive smoking. Nonsmokers exposed to secondhand smoke absorb nicotine and other toxic chemicals just as smokers do. The greater the exposure to secondhand smoke, the greater the level of these harmful chemicals in your body.

Why Is It a Problem?

Secondhand smoke is classified as a "known human carcinogen" (cancer-causing agent) by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the US National Toxicology Program, and the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), a branch of the World Health Organization.

Tobacco smoke contains over 4,000 chemical compounds. More than 60 of these are known or suspected to cause cancer.

Secondhand smoke can be harmful in many ways. In the United States alone, each year it is responsible for:

- an estimated 35,000 deaths from heart disease in people who live with smokers but are not current smokers
- about 3,400 lung cancer deaths in nonsmoking adults
- other respiratory problems in nonsmokers, including coughing, phlegm, chest discomfort, and reduced lung function
- 150,000 to 300,000 lower respiratory tract infections (such as pneumonia and bronchitis) in children younger than 18 months of age, which result in 7,500 to 15,000 hospitalizations
- increases in the number and severity of asthma attacks in about 200,000 to 1 million asthmatic children
- increased incidence of middle ear infections in young children

Pregnant women exposed to ETS are also at increased risk of having low birth weight babies.

An issue that continues to be an active focus of scientific research is whether secondhand smoke may increase the risk of breast cancer. Both mainstream and secondhand smoke contain about 20 chemicals that, in high concentrations, cause breast cancer in rodents. Chemicals in tobacco smoke reach breast tissue and are found in breast milk.

The evidence regarding secondhand smoke and breast cancer risk in human studies is controversial, at least in part because the risk has not been shown to be increased in active smokers. One possible explanation for this is that tobacco smoke may have different effects on

breast cancer risk in smokers and in those who are just exposed to smoke.

A report from the California Environmental Protection Agency in 2005 concluded that the evidence regarding secondhand smoke and breast cancer is "consistent with a causal association" in younger, mainly premenopausal women. The 2006 US Surgeon General's report, *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke*, concluded that there is "suggestive but not sufficient" evidence of a link at this point. In any case, women should be told that this possible link to breast cancer is yet another reason to avoid contact with secondhand smoke.

The 2006 US Surgeon General's report reached several important conclusions:

- Secondhand smoke causes premature death and disease in children and in adults who do not smoke.
- Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at an increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), acute respiratory infections, ear problems, and more severe asthma. Smoking by parents causes respiratory symptoms and slows lung growth in their children.
- Exposure of adults to secondhand smoke has immediate adverse effects on the cardiovascular system and causes coronary heart disease and lung cancer.
- The scientific evidence indicates that there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Many millions of Americans, both children and adults, are still exposed to secondhand smoke in their homes and workplaces despite substantial progress in tobacco control.
- Eliminating smoking in indoor spaces fully protects nonsmokers from exposure to secondhand smoke. Separating smokers from nonsmokers, cleaning the air, and ventilating buildings cannot eliminate exposures of nonsmokers to secondhand smoke.

Where Is It a Problem?

There are 3 locations where you should be especially concerned about exposure to secondhand smoke:

Your workplace: The workplace is a major source of secondhand smoke exposure for adults. Secondhand smoke meets the criteria to be classified as a potential cancer-causing agent by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the federal agency responsible for health and safety regulations in the workplace. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), another federal agency, also recommends that secondhand smoke be considered a potential occupational carcinogen. Because there are no known safe levels, they recommend that exposures to secondhand smoke be reduced to the lowest possible levels.

Secondhand smoke exposure in the workplace has been linked to an increased risk for heart disease and lung cancer among adult nonsmokers. The Surgeon General has concluded that smoke-free workplace policies are the only effective way to eliminate secondhand smoke exposure in the workplace. Separating smokers from nonsmokers, cleaning the air, and ventilating buildings cannot eliminate exposure. Aside from protecting nonsmokers, workplace smoking restrictions may also encourage smokers who wish to quit or reduce their consumption of tobacco products.

Public places: Everyone is vulnerable to secondhand smoke exposure in public places, such as restaurants, shopping centers, public transportation, schools, and daycare centers. Although some businesses are reluctant to ban smoking, there is no credible evidence that going smoke-free is bad for business. Public places where children go are a special area of concern.

Your home: Making your home smoke-free is perhaps one of the most important things you can do for the health of your family. Any family member can develop health problems related to secondhand smoke. Children are especially sensitive. In the United States, 21 million, or 35% of children live in homes where residents or visitors smoke in the home on a regular basis. Approximately 50% to 75% of children in the United States have detectable levels of cotinine, the breakdown product of nicotine, in their blood.

Think about it: we spend more time at home than anywhere else. A smoke-free home protects your family, your guests, and even your pets.

Smoking Odors

There is no research in the medical literature about the cancer-causing effects of cigarette odors, but the literature shows that secondhand tobacco smoke can permeate the hair, clothing, and other surfaces. The unknown cancer causing effects would likely be minimal in comparison to direct secondhand smoke exposure, such as living in a household that has a smoker.

What Can Be Done About It?

Local, state, and federal authorities can enact public policies to protect people from secondhand smoke and to protect children from tobacco-caused diseases and addiction. Because there are no safe levels of secondhand smoke, it is important that any such policies be as strong as possible, and that they do not prevent action at other levels of government.

Government administrators in many US localities and states (and even federal governments in some other countries) have decided that protecting the health of employees and others in public places is of the utmost importance, and many have passed clean indoor air laws in recent years. While the regulations vary from place to place, they are growing in popularity. Detailed information on smoking restrictions in each state is available from the American Lung Association at <http://slati.lungusa.org>.

To learn how you can become involved in reducing exposure to secondhand smoke, contact your American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345 (1-800-227-2345).

Additional Resources

Other Organizations

In addition to the American Cancer Society, other sources of information and support include*:

American Heart Association
Telephone: 1-800-AHA-USA-1 (1-800-242-8721)
Internet Address: www.americanheart.org

American Lung Association
Telephone: 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872)
Internet Address: www.lungusa.org

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Internet Address: www.epa.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Office on Smoking and Health
Internet Address: www.cdc.gov/tobacco/

National Cancer Institute
Telephone: 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237)
Internet Address: www.cancer.gov

Smokefree.gov
(Info on state phone-based quitting programs)
Telephone: 1-800-QUITNOW (1-800-784-8669)
Internet Address: www.smokefree.gov

**Inclusion on this list does not imply endorsement by the American Cancer Society.*

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Double Your Chances of Quitting Smoking

Among current US smokers, more than 70% say they want to quit, but only 5% to 10% are successful on any given attempt. Quitting smoking can be tough, but we have come up with some ways you can double your chances of being successful. Even better, use more than one of the ideas listed below and boost your odds of quitting smoking for good!

Consider Using Medicines to Help You Quit

Research has shown using a quitting smoking medication, such as bupropion (Zyban), varenicline (Chantix), or the nicotine patch, gum, nasal spray, inhaler, or lozenge, can double your chances of successfully quitting. Bupropion is a non-nicotine, prescription medicine that helps reduce cravings. Varenicline is a drug that helps lessen nicotine withdrawal symptoms and lowers the pleasurable feelings people get when smoking. Using a nicotine replacement product can address uncomfortable physical withdrawal symptoms, giving you the chance to concentrate on changing the "habit" or routine of smoking. Talk to your doctor or health care provider about setting up a medicine strategy that will work for you. Depending on your smoking habits and previous attempts to quit, your doctor may recommend using one or more of these medicines. It is likely, though, that your doctor will not recommend using bupropion or varenicline *with* nicotine replacement products. It will depend on your health and the safety of using both at the same time. Chantix, in particular, has not been available long enough for us to know whether it is safe to use NRT (nicotine replacement therapy) with it.

Get Self-help Materials to Guide Yourself Through the Quitting Process

Materials are available to help you quit smoking, no matter where you are in the process. You can use the materials to learn how to prepare for your quit attempt, develop strategies to help with cravings, and prevent relapse once you have quit. The self-help materials offer proven methods that are easy to follow and can keep your motivation high. The American Cancer Society's "Break Away From the Pack" series has been shown to double your chances of quitting successfully. This material is available for those who are willing to quit smoking. For more information on "Break Away From the Pack" or other self-help materials from the American Cancer Society, call 1-800-ACS-2345 (1-800-227-2345).

Find Out About Support Programs Near You

The American Cancer Society can tell you about smoking cessation resources in your community. These may include classes, support groups, Internet resources, or medication assistance referrals. It is important to have support from several different sources during your quit attempt, including family, friends, doctors, and stop smoking professionals. Call 1-800-ACS-2345 for more details.

Use Telephone Counseling Programs

You may be able to use a telephone counseling program, such as the American Cancer Society's Quitline[®] tobacco cessation program, in your area. You can receive quitting strategies and support over the phone, at times that are convenient for you. Telephone counseling programs

have been proven to double your chances of successfully quitting. Your state may sponsor a Quitline program, or you can enroll in the American Cancer Society's Quitline program clinical trial.

Here are some general tips to help you try to quit:

- Talk to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about which medicines are right for you.
- Write down your reasons for wanting to quit; keep the list with you for extra motivation.
- Throw away all of your cigarettes and ashtrays.
- Substitute the activities you do with smoking and other
- Set a quit date and plan ahead to help deal with cravings.
- Tell your family, friends, and coworkers about your plans to quit.
- Have alternatives to smoking available, such as peppermints, carrot sticks, or cinnamon sticks.
- Stay busy.
- Avoid situations that always trigger an urge to smoke.

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Quitting Smoking – Help for Cravings and Tough Situations

Quitting smoking can be a long and difficult process. Every day you must make the decision not to smoke today. Staying quit is the final and most important stage of the process. Each day that you do not smoke is a small victory which adds up to a huge victory over time. Many of the methods that help you quit can help you gain that victory.

Things to Do to Get Through Rough Spots After You Stop Smoking

- For the first few days after you quit smoking, spend as much free time as possible in public places where smoking is not allowed, such as libraries, malls, museums, theaters, restaurants without bars, and churches.
- Don't drink alcohol, coffee, and other drinks you associate with smoking. Try drinking a variety of other drinks instead. Try different types of waters or fruit juices. This may be the time to indulge in some interesting teas you have never tried.
- If you miss the feeling of having a cigarette in your hand, put a substitute in your hand -- a pencil, a paper clip, a coin, or a marble, for example.
- If you miss the feeling of having something in your mouth, try toothpicks, cinnamon sticks, sugarless gum or celery.
- Avoid temptation by staying away from situations you associate with pleasurable smoking.
- Find new habits and create a nonsmoking environment around you.
- Anticipate future situations or crises that might make you want to smoke again, and remind yourself of all the important reasons you have decided to quit. To reinforce these reasons, you may want to put a picture of your children up in your workplace or keep one handy in your purse or wallet.
- Take deep, rhythmic breaths similar to smoking to relax, and picture your lungs filling with fresh, clean air.
- Remember your goal and the fact that the urges to smoke will eventually pass.
- Think positive thoughts about how awesome it is that you are quitting smoking and getting healthy and try to avoid negative ones.
- Brush your teeth and enjoy that fresh taste.
- Do brief bursts of exercise (alternate tensing and relaxing muscles, pushups, deep knee bends, walk up a flight of stairs, or touch your toes).
- Call a supportive friend, family member, or Quitline[®] counselor.
- Eat several small meals during the day instead of 1 or 2 large ones. This maintains constant blood sugar levels, which keeps your energy in balance and helps prevent the urge to smoke. Avoid sugary or spicy foods that may trigger a desire for cigarettes.
- Above all, reward yourself. Reward yourself frequently if that's what it takes to keep going. Plan to do something fun for doing your best.

When You Get the "Crazies"

- Keep oral substitutes handy, such as carrots, pickles, apples, celery, raisins, or gum.
- Take 10 deep breaths, and hold the last one while lighting a match. Exhale slowly and blow out the match. Pretend it is a cigarette and put it out in an ashtray.
- Take a shower or bath.

- Learn to relax quickly and deeply. Make yourself go limp. Visualize a soothing, pleasing situation, and get away from it all for a moment. Concentrate on that peaceful image and nothing else.
- Light incense or a candle, instead of a cigarette.
- Tell yourself "no." Say it out loud. Practice doing this a few times, and listen to yourself. Some other things you can say to yourself might be, "I'm too strong to give in to smoking," "I'm a nonsmoker now," or "I don't want to let my friends and family down."
- Never allow yourself to think that "one won't hurt," because it may.
- Wear a rubber band around your wrist. Whenever you have a thought about smoking, snap it against your wrist to remind yourself of all the unpleasant reasons that made you want to quit in the first place. Then remember that you will not always need a rubber band to help you stay in line with your plans to quit. Smile at yourself then go get an apple or walk outside and breathe in the fresh air. Or start a conversation with your coworker or neighbor that has nothing to do with you.

Other Ways to Stay Active

You may have a lot of pent-up energy while trying to quit. Consider these activities when you're looking for something to do besides smoking. Notice how over time these activities are easier to do and how much better you can breathe as you go each day without smoking.

Physical Activities

- walking or jogging
- biking
- hiking
- swimming
- doing aerobics
- going bowling
- playing soccer
- playing tennis
- playing volleyball
- playing softball
- karate or judo
- yoga

Activities Around the Home

- gardening
- cooking, grilling, or baking
- organizing/cleaning out the basement, garage, or attic
- organizing a yard sale
- painting/redecorating rooms
- washing/waxing the car

Going Out

- going fishing, hunting, or camping
- having a picnic
- going shopping
- getting a manicure or pedicure
- going for a leisurely drive
- going to a garage sale or yard sale

- going to a library or bookstore
- going to a museum
- going to the movies

Hobbies and Crafts

- playing (or learning) a musical instrument
- reading a book
- starting a collection (stamps, coins, or shells, for example)
- doing puzzles (crossword or jigsaw)
- starting a journal or scrapbook
- organizing photos
- knitting or sewing
- writing (books, poems, articles, journaling)

Relaxing

- reading a newspaper or magazine
- meditating
- listening to a relaxation tape
- taking a nap
- listening to music

Being With Others

- calling an old friend
- having someone over for dinner or to watch movies
- going out to eat
- joining a group or club
- having a family get-together

Staying Quit Over the Holidays

The first few weeks after quitting smoking can be difficult for anyone. This may be especially tough during the holiday season, when stress and the temptation to overindulge are there for everyone. Some special approaches can help you celebrate the holidays without giving in to the urge to smoke. Many of these strategies can also be helpful throughout the year.

Celebrate being an ex-smoker and try these tips to keep smoking off your mind:

- **Be a host.** Consider hosting the family dinner to keep yourself occupied. Shopping and cooking will certainly keep you busy. If you would prefer being a guest this year, consider making a special dish to take with you.
- **Don't overindulge.** Without smoking, you might have a tendency to go overboard with the holiday feasting. Be aware of how much you are eating and drinking; it's easy to give in to the other temptations. If you do overindulge, forgive yourself. Remember next year, it won't be as hard.
- **Try staying away from alcohol** by sticking to club soda, punch without alcohol, or apple cider. This will curb the urge to light up when drinking and will help keep off extra pounds.
- **Avoid spicy and sugary foods.** These tend to enhance the cravings for cigarettes.
- **Nibble on low-calorie foods**, such as carrot sticks, apples, and other healthy snacks, to satisfy the munchies without putting on extra pounds.
- **Stretch out meals.** Eating slowly and pausing between bites will make the meal more

satisfying. For dessert, grab an orange or tangerine, or crack some nuts -- something that will keep your hands busy.

- **Keep busy at parties** by playing bartender, serving snacks, and meeting guests to keep your mind off smoking. If the urge to smoke presents itself, put something in your hand other than a cigarette. A bartender's mixing straw is a perfect substitute.
- **Treat yourself to something special** for staying smoke-free. As a celebration of staying quit, consider giving yourself that special something you have always wanted.
- **Don't wait until the last minute to shop.** Any added frustration can leave you wanting a cigarette. When you are ready to lose control, stop and think. Take hold of yourself and start a conversation with someone in line next to you, or take along your favorite fun magazine, book, or catalog to look through while waiting in lines.

More Suggestions

If you have a weak moment during the holidays and slip, don't panic. Decide to begin again immediately and remind yourself of your commitment to quit. Analyze why you had a setback and learn from it. Here are more tactics that have helped smokers kick the habit:

- **Stay positive.** After waking up each morning, make the promise you won't smoke a cigarette that day. A day at a time keeps the whole thing more manageable.
- **Picture your success.** Plan ahead and think of how you will deal with stressful situations without turning to your usual crutch of a cigarette.
- **Take a breather.** Relaxation exercises can help relieve the urge to smoke. Take a deep breath, hold it for a second, then release it very slowly. Remember, the urge to smoke is only temporary. It will pass.
- **Work out.** Physical activity, such as swimming, running, and racquet sports, helps relieve tension and the urge to smoke. Exercise will also burn off any extra pounds.
- **Rely on support.** If you're thinking about reaching for a cigarette, reach for help instead. Ask your friends and family to encourage the new nonsmoking you, reach out to a formal support group, or call a Quitline. You can always call your American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345. We're here to support you.

Additional Resources

More Information From Your American Cancer Society

We have selected some related information that may also be helpful to you. These materials may be ordered from our toll-free number, 1-800-ACS-2345 (1-800-227-2345).

- [Cigarette Smoking](#) (available in Spanish only through our toll-free number)
- [Double Your Chances of Quitting Smoking](#)
- [Guide to Quitting Smoking](#) (available in Spanish only through our toll-free number)
- [Helping a Smoker Quit: Dos and Don'ts](#)
- Kicking Butts: Your Step-by-Step Guide to Quitting Smoking
- Set Yourself Free: A Smoker's Guide
- [Questions About Smoking, Tobacco, and Health](#) (available in Spanish only through our toll-free number)

The American Cancer Society is happy to address almost any cancer-related topic. If you have any more questions, please call us at 1-800-ACS-2345 any time, 24 hours a day.

References

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Helping A Smoker Quit: Do's and Don'ts

General Hints for Friends and Family

- Do respect that the quitter is in charge. This is their lifestyle change and their challenge, not yours.
- Do ask the person whether he or she wants you to call or visit regularly to see how he or she is doing. Let the person know that it's okay to call you whenever he or she needs to hear encouraging words.
- Do help the quitter get what she or he needs, such as hard candy to suck on, straws to chew on, fresh veggies cut up and kept cold in the refrigerator, etc.
- Do spend time doing things with the quitter to keep his or her mind off smoking – go to the movies or take a walk to get past a craving (what many call a "nicotine fit").
- Do help the quitter with a few chores, some child care, cooking – whatever will help lighten the stress of quitting.
- Do celebrate along the way. Quitting smoking is a BIG DEAL!
- Don't take the quitter's grumpiness personally during his or her nicotine withdrawal. The symptoms will pass in about two weeks.
- Don't offer advice. Just ask how you can help with the plan or program they are using.

If Your Smoker Relapses...

Research shows that most people try to quit smoking five to seven times before they are successful. Don't give up your efforts to encourage and support your loved one. If the person you care about fails to quit:

- Do praise him or her for trying to quit, and for whatever length of time (days, weeks, or months) of not smoking.
- Do encourage him or her to try again. Don't say, "If you try again..." Say, "When you try again..." Studies show that most people who don't succeed in quitting are ready to try again in the near future.
- Do encourage him or her to learn from the attempt. Things a person learns from a failed attempt to quit may help him or her be successful in a future attempt.

If You Are a Smoker...

- Do smoke outside and always away from the quitter.
- Do keep your cigarettes and matches out of sight. They might be triggers to smoke.
- Don't ever offer the quitter a smoke, even in jest!
- Do make an effort to quit. It's better for your health and might be easier to do with someone else that is trying to quit!

Call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345 to find out what resources might be available to you for your quit attempt.