



Smoking Cessation

What are the benefits of quitting smoking?

Quitting smoking is not easy for most people, and it might take several tries to completely quit. But help and support are available. Quitting will improve your health no matter your age and even if you have smoked for a long time. Specifically, quitting will:

- Improve your health and help you live longer
- Lower your risk of heart and lung disease
- Lower your risk of kidney failure, cancer, infection, stomach problems & diabetes
- Lower your risk of getting osteoporosis

What should I do if I want to quit smoking?

It's a good idea to start by talking with your doctor. It is possible to quit on your own without help. However, getting help greatly increases your chance of success. When you are ready to quit, make a plan to:

- Set a "quit date"
- Tell family/friends you plan to quit
- Plan ahead for challenges, such as nicotine cravings
- Remove cigarettes from your home, work, car, etc.

What are the symptoms of withdrawal?

When you stop smoking you may experience:

- Trouble sleeping
- Feeling irritable, anxious or restless
- Feeling depressed
- Having trouble thinking/focusing clearly

What symptoms of depression might I experience?

People with depression may experience:

- Feeling sad, down, hopeless, nervous, etc.
- Less interest in things you normally enjoy
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Gaining or losing weight
- Feeling tired, guilty, confused, restless
- Speaking slower than usual
- Thoughts of suicide or death

If I experience depression how does counseling work/help?

Some people who quit smoking experience temporary depression. In some cases counseling can help. You can meet with a counselor in-person, over the phone, through texting and online. A counselor can help you figure out:

- What triggers you to want to smoke
- How to resist cravings
- How to handle challenges/situations

How can my doctor help me quit smoking?

Your doctor can give you advice on the best way to quit. They can also prescribe you medications to help:

- Reduce your cravings
- Reduce your withdrawal symptoms
- Find a counselor to talk to

How can medicine help me quit smoking?

Different medicines work in different ways:

- **Nicotine Replacement Therapy** - Nicotine is the main drug in cigarettes and the reason they are addictive. These medicines reduce your body's cravings for nicotine and help with withdrawal symptoms.
- **Varenicline** - Varenicline (brand name: *Chantix*) is a prescription medicine that reduces withdrawal symptoms and cigarette cravings. Varenicline can increase the effects of alcohol in some people. It's a good idea to limit drinking while you're taking it, at least until you know how it affects you.
- **Bupropion** - Bupropion (brand name: *Wellbutrin*) is a prescription medicine that reduces your desire to smoke. It is also available in a generic version, which is cheaper than the brand name medicines.

Research shows that combination nicotine replacement therapy and Wellbutrin/Chantix increases the likelihood of stopping.

What else can I do to improve my chances of quitting?

You can improve your quitting success by:

- Getting regular exercise (i.e. walking, jogging, etc.)
- Staying away from people who smoke
- Carrying gum, hard candies, cough drops, etc.
- Don't give up! Do not get discouraged! It takes most people a few tries before they succeed.

You can also get help from a free phone line (1-800-QUIT-NOW or 1-800-784-8669) or go online to www.smokefree.gov.