

# YOUR GUIDE FOR QUITTING SMOKING



Each year in the United States, cigarette smoking accounts for more than 480,000 deaths per year. This is about one in every five deaths annually.<sup>1</sup>

Smoking is the leading cause of premature, preventable death in the United States. It is the leading cause of cancer worldwide, resulting in nearly six million deaths each year.

Smoking is associated with an increased risk of nearly all chronic diseases, including coronary heart disease, stroke, respiratory diseases, and cancer.

Smoking is also associated with an increased risk of recurrence of certain cancers. Current smokers following a prostate cancer diagnosis are at higher risk of disease recurrence, progression, prostate cancer death, and overall death compared to never smokers, while former smokers who have quit 10 or more years prior have a similar risk of recurrence as never smokers.<sup>2</sup> An analysis of 15 studies that included patients with non-muscle invasive bladder cancer or muscle invasive bladder cancer reported an increased risk of recurrence in current smokers relative to never smokers,<sup>3</sup> while long-term smoking cessation may be associated with a reduced risk of recurrence and progression compared to current smoking.<sup>4</sup>

Quitting smoking is associated with lower risk of death due to chronic diseases.<sup>5</sup> Even if you have smoked for a long time, you can improve your health by quitting today. It is NEVER too late to quit, and even if you relapse, quitting again still helps. Take advantage of the resources listed below to help you quit today.

**There are no good forms of smoking. Cigarettes and their variations (such as “light,” “mild,” “low tar,” “ultra,” “all natural,” or “menthol”), cigars, pipes, and hookahs, all damage the body and have serious health risks. Avoid all tobacco products.**



1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: [The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General](#). Atlanta, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014.
2. Langlais CS, Graff RE, Van Blarigan EL, Palmer NR, Washington SL, 3rd, Chan JM, et al: [Post-Diagnostic Dietary and Lifestyle Factors and Prostate Cancer Recurrence, Progression, and Mortality](#). *Curr Oncol Rep* 23:37, 2021.
3. Hou L, Hong X, Dai M, Chen P, Zhao H, Wei Q, et al. [Association of smoking status with prognosis in bladder cancer: A meta-analysis](#). *Oncotarget*. 2017;8(1):1278-89.
4. Zuniga KB, Graff RE, Feiger DB, Meng MV, Porten SP, Kenfield SA. [Lifestyle and Non-muscle Invasive Bladder Cancer Recurrence, Progression, and Mortality: Available Research and Future Directions](#). *Bladder Cancer* 2020;6(1):9-23.
5. Cao Y, Kenfield S, Song Y, Rosner B, Qiu W, Sesso HD, et al: [Cigarette smoking cessation and total and cause-specific mortality: a 22-year follow-up study among US male physicians](#). *Arch Intern Med* 171:1956-9, 2011.

# BEFORE YOU QUIT

## KNOW YOUR REASONS FOR QUITTING

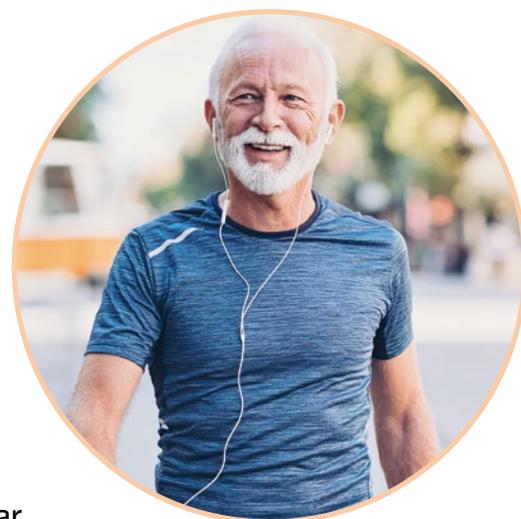
Make a list of all the reasons you want to become smokefree. If you're not sure, ask yourself these questions:

1. How is smoking affecting my health and my cancer?
2. What will happen to me and my family if I keep smoking?
3. How will my life get better when I quit?

Here are some reasons to consider:

- My chances of having heart attacks, heart disease, stroke, cataracts, and other diseases will go down.
- I will be less likely to catch colds or the flu and will be able to recover quicker if I do get sick.
- I will breathe easier and cough less.
- My blood pressure will go down.
- My skin will look healthier, and I will protect my skin from premature aging and wrinkling.
- My teeth and fingernails will not be stained.
- I will lower my chances of erectile dysfunction.
- I will preserve my overall eyesight and improve my night vision.
- I will have stronger and healthier muscles, and reduce my risk of bone fractures.

Keep your list in a place where you will see it often, like your car or where you used to keep your cigarettes. When you feel the urge to smoke, take a look at the list to remind yourself why you want to quit.



**LIVE LONGER  
AND HEALTHIER**



**SAVE MONEY**



**MY DOCTOR  
RECOMMENDED  
QUITTING**



**TAKE BACK  
CONTROL OF  
MY LIFE**



**FOR MY FAMILY  
AND FRIENDS**



**TO LOOK OR  
SMELL BETTER**

## MAKE A DECISION TO QUIT

One of the first steps is to learn why you feel like you need to smoke. Once you understand why you smoke, you can prepare yourself to find the best ways to quit. Nicotine withdrawal and other triggers in your life (such as activities, feelings, people) may make it difficult to stop smoking. You should try to anticipate these challenges and develop ways to deal with them such as going to places that don't allow smoking, keeping your hands or yourself busy, or spending more time with non-smokers.

## TAKE STEPS TO QUIT AND BUILD YOUR QUIT PLAN

Quitting can be a bit easier if you have a plan. For instance, set your quit date in advance so you can give yourself time to prepare. Then, over time, learn how to handle your triggers and cravings, as well as explore your quitting options. See below for more helpful tips:

- Pick a quit date
- Let loved ones know you are quitting and explain how they can help you quit with their support
- Remove reminders of smoking such as cigarettes, matches, ashtrays, and lighters
- Develop strategies to cope with withdrawal feelings
- Have places you can turn to for immediate help
- Set rewards for quitting milestones

Choose your reasons for quitting smoking. Knowing your reasons for why you want to quit can help keep you motivated and on track, especially in difficult moments.

Make your [personalized quit plan](#).



## LEARN ABOUT NICOTINE REPLACEMENT THERAPY



Many people use quit smoking medications to help reduce withdrawal feelings and cigarette cravings. Quit smoking medications can double your chances of quitting for good. Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) is the most commonly used family of quit smoking medications. NRT reduces withdrawal feelings by giving you a small, controlled amount of nicotine — but none of the other dangerous chemicals found in cigarettes.

# STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE QUITTING

## MANAGING WITHDRAWAL AND PREPARING FOR CRAVINGS

Withdrawal is your body getting used to not having nicotine. Nicotine withdrawal is different for every smoker. Some common symptoms include:

- Having cravings for cigarettes or other tobacco products
- Feeling sad, irritable, restless, or hungry
- Having trouble sleeping
- Having trouble thinking clearly and concentrating

Over time, the cravings and symptoms will fade as long as you stay smokefree. Medications and changing the things you do can help to manage withdrawal and cravings. Cravings tend to last longer than other symptoms of withdrawal and can happen without warning. It's important to have a plan for handling a craving when it hits. For example, find a way to distract yourself and stay busy. A short walk can be useful to distract yourself until the craving passes. Make a list of other strategies now and keep your list easily accessible, so you can refer to it immediately when you have a craving.



Mood changes are common after quitting smoking. Some people feel increased sadness. You might be irritable, restless, or feel down or blue. Mood changes from nicotine withdrawal usually get better in a week or two. There are things you can try to lift your mood, like exercise, making plans and staying busy, or seeing or talking with friends. If mood changes do not get better in a couple of weeks, you should talk to your doctor. Something else, like depression, could be the reason.

## REDUCE YOUR STRESS

Some people smoke when they feel stressed. There are many problems with using cigarettes or other tobacco products as a way to cope with stress or other unpleasant feelings. Smoking isn't a long-term stress reliever. It doesn't solve the problem that's giving you stress and may make it worse. Nicotine addiction can cause stress. In the time it takes to smoke a cigarette, you could do something else that's more effective—like take a short walk or try a relaxation exercise. It is important to find healthy ways to handle stress and take care of yourself without smoking.

## AVOID SECONDHAND SMOKE

Secondhand smoke is the combination of smoke that comes from a cigarette or other tobacco product and smoke breathed out by a smoker. When a non-smoker is around someone smoking, they breathe in secondhand smoke. It can also stay in the air for several hours after somebody smokes. Over time, secondhand smoke has been associated with serious health problems in non-smokers:

- Lung cancer in people who have never smoked
- An increased risk of developing heart disease, having a heart attack, or an early death
- Breathing problems like coughing, extra phlegm, wheezing, and shortness of breath

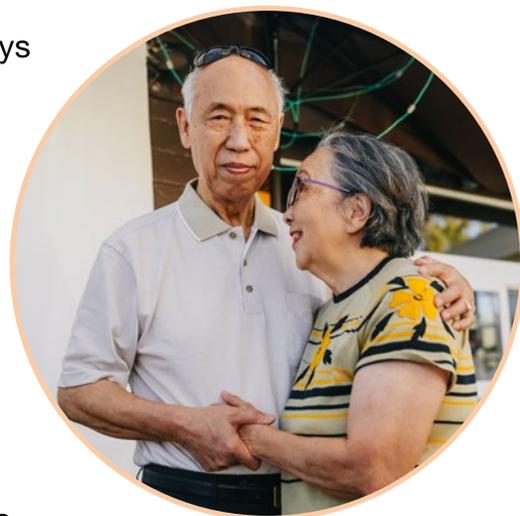
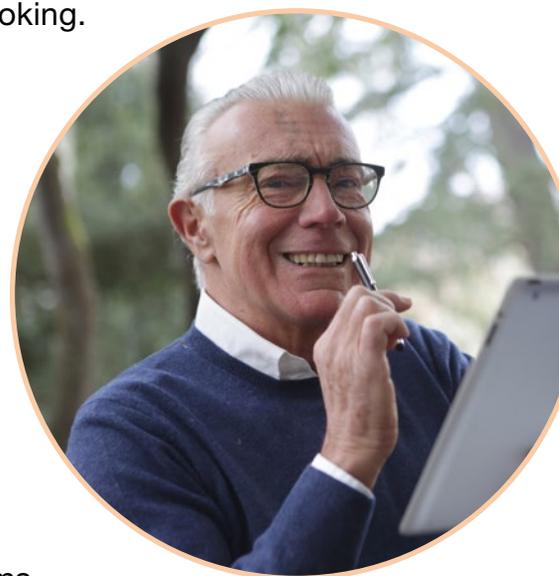
Secondhand smoke is especially dangerous for children, babies, and women who are pregnant. The best thing you can do to protect your family from secondhand smoke is to quit smoking. Right away, you get rid of their exposure to secondhand smoke in your home and car and reduce it anywhere else you go together.

## MAINTAINING YOUR QUIT

### PREVENT SLIPS

Many smokers slip and smoke a cigarette while they're quitting smoking. Slips are common so don't be too hard on yourself. A slip doesn't make you a failure or mean you're relapsing. It doesn't mean you can't quit for good. Don't use a slip as an excuse to start smoking again. If you slip, you might try these ways to get back on track:

- Feel proud of the time you went without smoking cigarettes or other tobacco products. Think about ways you avoided your triggers and beat cravings. Try to use those ways to cope again.
- It's important to restart quitting right away—today or tomorrow at the latest. Don't give up on your goal of no cigarettes or other tobacco products at all.
- If quitting forever seems too hard right now, try a text message program to help you prepare to quit in the future. These programs help you build skills for dealing with cravings, triggers, and stressful situations. You can try a Practice Quit for a few days or do a week of Daily Challenges without quitting. [Sign up online](#) or by texting **GO** to **47848**.
- Use nicotine replacement therapy (NRT). You don't need to stop using NRT after you slip and smoke one or two cigarettes. Using NRT increases your chances of staying smokefree for good.
- Get support. If you slip, talk to family or friends. Ask them for help to stay smokefree. You don't have to do it alone.
- Think about what you learned when you were not smoking. What helped you to stay smokefree and what caused you to have a slip? What can you do differently now to help yourself be smokefree again?



# UCSF TOBACCO CESSATION SERVICES

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The [Fontana Tobacco Treatment Center at UCSF Medical Center](#) offers classes as well as individual consultations with health care professionals trained in treating tobacco addiction. The Center will help you maximize the likelihood of your success to quit.

Call **415-885-7895** for more information.

## UCSF GROUP PROGRAMS

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The [Cessation Program](#) is composed of four weekly two-hour sessions that cover issues related to smoking and health, medications to ease withdrawal, neurobiology and addiction, and tools for building and sustaining your motivation to quit. The cost for this program is \$55.

The [Freedom from Smoking/Vaping/Chewing Support Group](#) meets weekly and is available to graduates of the Cessation Program who want continued help to remain smoke free or work toward that goal.

## NATIONAL RESOURCES TO QUIT SMOKING

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### GUIDES

Access the [American Cancer Society guide](#) with information and resources to help you quit smoking.

Access the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guide](#) for quitting smoking.

For Spanish speakers, access [espanol.smokefree.gov](#).

### QUITLINES

**1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)** and **1-877-448-QUIT (1-877-448-7848)**.

These are free services to help people quit tobacco use, sponsored by the state of California and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. These quitlines are staffed with trained experts in smoking cessation. You can also receive information and advice through real-time text messaging.

Live help is also available in Spanish at **1-855-DÉJELO-YA (1-855-335-3569)** or [LiveHelp-es.cancer.gov](#).



The content presented here was adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guide at <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/quit-smoking/>. Content sources are: [Smokefree.gov](#), [Office on Smoking and Health](#), [National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion](#), [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

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