

National Cancer Institute



# Clear Pathways

Winning the Fight Against Tobacco

U.S. Department of  
Health and Human  
Services

National Institutes  
of Health





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# Introduction

## From the National Cancer Institute (NCI): Congratulations! You are taking the first step to quitting cigarette smoking.

NCI wrote this booklet for African Americans with the help of former smokers and experts. People of all races smoke cigarettes, but here are some important facts you may not know about smoking's health effects for African Americans.

- African Americans usually smoke fewer cigarettes and start smoking at an older age, but they are more likely to die from smoking-related diseases than Caucasians.
- Diseases caused by smoking kill more African Americans than illegal drugs, alcoholism, murder, suicide, and HIV/AIDS combined.
- Compared to Caucasian men, African American-men have higher rates of death from stroke, heart disease, and cancers. Smoking increases your chance of getting these diseases and dying from them.
- Even though African-American women are less likely to smoke during pregnancy than Caucasian women, African Americans are more likely to have low-birthweight babies. Smoking can increase your risk of delivering a low-birthweight baby and can increase your baby's risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

We need to stop cigarettes from taking the lives of African Americans. If you are a smoker, keep trying to quit. Sometimes it takes many attempts to quit for good. You can do it.

This booklet is available for free download at [Smokefree.gov](http://Smokefree.gov) (<http://smokefree.gov/>).

The National Cancer Institute is part of the National Institutes of Health, 1 of 11 agencies in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NCI is the U.S. Government's principal agency for cancer research and training.



**You *can* create a healthier, happier future for you and your loved ones.**

## Win the Fight Against Smoking

Even if you have tried to quit and have gone back to smoking before, you can quit. Many smokers try to quit several times before they succeed.

Many tips are offered in this booklet. Choose what works best for you. Don't be afraid to combine or change quitting strategies. Reward yourself for reaching important goals. Use this guide when quitting becomes hard. Being prepared can help you through the rough times.

When you quit, you will immediately notice the benefits. Your loved ones will not breathe your secondhand smoke. Quitting will reduce the risk of illness for your family.

Stay upbeat. Keep trying. Use what you learn each step of the way until you quit for good. Soon you will be able to enjoy the benefits of living a smoke-free life.

You *can* create a healthier, happier future for you and your loved ones.

# Understand Why You Smoke

Nicotine is a powerful drug. It is what makes cigarettes addictive. You don't have to smoke very much to become addicted. Becoming addicted to nicotine is similar to the way people can be addicted to other drugs, like crack, heroin, or cocaine. It sounds serious because it is.

## 1. You've taught your body to crave nicotine.

You get a feeling or "buzz" when you smoke. Nicotine reaches your brain in about 10 seconds. Your brain and body get used to having nicotine in it. This means that when you don't smoke, your brain and body start to miss the feeling of nicotine.

You start to enter nicotine withdrawal, meaning that your body starts to crave more nicotine, about 30 minutes after your last cigarette. Combined with the things happening around you, this makes you want to smoke another cigarette.

This booklet will teach you how to combat nicotine withdrawal and cravings.

## 2. Smoking is part of your daily routine.

Over the years, smoking has become such a strong part of your daily life. Think about all of the places where you smoke:

- Outside at your workplace
- At friends' homes
- In your car
- At the bus or train stop
- Your bedroom, kitchen, or bathroom
- In front or in back of your home
- In front of stores or the mall.

Being at places where people are smoking can cause you to want to smoke, too. Quitting smoking means that you have to change some of your daily routines or avoid certain places.

This booklet will teach you how to avoid "trigger situations" that increase your urge to smoke.

## 3. Your loved ones smoke.

Did you know that smoking runs in families? Smokers also tend to have friends who smoke. If you hang out with friends, family, or coworkers who smoke, you are more likely to crave and smoke cigarettes. For example, you might smoke at social events like parties, barbecues, or family holiday gatherings.

The truth is that most people do not smoke. You can't always avoid being around smokers, but you can choose to resist temptation and spend more time with loved ones who support your quit effort.

This booklet will teach you how to ask your loved ones for support and to deal with those who don't support you when you decide to quit.

## 4. You are stressed out.

People who have a lot of stress or are depressed or anxious are more likely to smoke. African Americans often face extra stress due to discrimination and prejudice, and this could also affect your smoking.

*Smoking does not fix problems.* Smoking does not make stress, sadness, or anxiety go away. Instead, smoking could make them worse. People addicted to alcohol or drugs can also have a harder time quitting smoking than people who are not. Talk to your doctor or seek counseling if these things are a problem for you.

# Tobacco Companies Target Our Community

Tobacco companies work hard to get your business. In general, African-American communities have been exposed to more cigarette ads than Caucasian communities.

For decades, tobacco companies have sponsored African-American music, arts, sports, education, scholarship programs, and other groups. Our kids attend these events. They look up to celebrities who use or endorse cigarettes at these events. What kind of message is this sending? This amount of “support” is *nothing* compared with the amount of money African Americans have spent on cigarettes and the lives that have been taken by smoking.

Why should you give money to an industry that sells a deadly and addictive product? You can improve yourself and your family by taking your cigarette money and spending it on something better.

## Talk to Your Children About the Dangers of Smoking.

Be sure they know that smoking harms not only the smoker but every member of the African-American community. By spreading awareness, more members of the African-American community will have the tools and knowledge to win the fight against cigarette addiction.



## Tobacco Control Act: Protecting Our Children

Tobacco companies know that to get more customers, they have to hook people when they're young.

Many tobacco companies once sold cigarettes with fruit and candy flavoring that looked good to kids. But in 2009, President Barack Obama signed into law the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, making it illegal to sell most flavors of cigarettes. This law will help stop tobacco companies from hooking kids into a lifetime of addiction.

You can also help protect kids by quitting smoking and being a role model for people in our community.



**By quitting now,  
you can prevent  
short-term problems  
from turning into  
long-term problems.**

## How Smoking Affects Your Health

If you are a smoker, your health is probably suffering because of cigarettes right now. When you quit smoking, you will lower your risk of disease in the future, but you will also improve your health immediately. Quitting smoking is one of the best ways to improve your health and live a longer life!

### **Smoking Causes Health Problems Right Away**

The bad health effects from smoking start the moment you smoke your first cigarette.

Smoking might already be holding you back from living a full and active life. Many smokers have less energy

and are sick more often than nonsmokers. This makes it harder for you to provide for your family and do many of the activities you enjoy. Some of these health problems could be familiar to you:

- Experiencing a dry cough
- Producing too much phlegm
- Having trouble breathing
- Running out of air easily (for example, when walking up a flight of stairs)
- Getting sick with a cold or the flu more often than others
- Feeling colder than you should be (caused by less blood flow to your hands and feet from smoking).

Some of the effects of smoking are not as serious but could bother you or your family. Smokers often:

- Have bad breath and yellow teeth
- Smell like smoke
- Have a dulled sense of taste and smell.

When you quit smoking, many of these health problems will quickly improve.

*By quitting now, you can prevent short-term problems from turning into long-term problems.*

# Know What You're Putting Into Your Body

There are 7,000 known chemicals in cigarette smoke. At least 69 are known to cause cancer in humans.

## Some of the chemicals in cigarette smoke are:

Acetone	Used to make fingernail polish remover
Ammonia	Found in urine and used in fertilizer
Arsenic	An effective rat poison and weed killer
Beryllium	A toxic metal used for x-ray tubes, nuclear weapons, aircraft brakes, and rocket fuel additives
Butane	Cigarette lighter fluid
Cadmium	Used in paint and to make batteries and plastic
Carbon monoxide	Found in car exhaust fumes
Ethylene oxide	Used to make antifreeze and pesticides
Formaldehyde	Used to preserve dead people
Hydrogen cyanide	Gas chamber poison
Naphthalene	Used for mothballs
Nitrobenzene	A gasoline additive
Stearic acid	Candle wax
Toluene	Used to make gasoline, paint, paint thinner, fingernail polish, glue, and rubber
Vinyl chloride	Used to make plastics

Every time you smoke a cigarette or your loved one breathes secondhand smoke, these harmful chemicals enter your bodies.

Don't be fooled by claims that some cigarettes are "natural" or "light." There is no such thing as a natural or light cigarette. All types of cigarettes contain chemicals known to cause cancer and other diseases.

# Secondhand Smoke and Our Children

Secondhand smoke is smoke made by a burning cigarette or smoke exhaled by smokers that is then inhaled by others.

Secondhand smoke is a danger to kids who live with smokers or are around smokers. If you smoke around kids, they will breathe in smoke from your lit cigarette and the smoke you exhale. This smoke has many of the same toxins that are in a cigarette.

Breathing problems like asthma can be made worse by secondhand smoke. Kids who are around smokers also cough more, begin wheezing, and get more ear infections. Secondhand smoke causes serious diseases, like cancer. Doing things like rolling down the car window or smoking only in your bedroom does not stop the problem.

## When you quit:

- Your children will have fewer ear infections, fewer breathing and nasal problems, and less coughing.
- Your baby will be less likely to have serious lung diseases or problems, such as bronchitis or pneumonia.
- Your children might have fewer visits to the doctor and might not need to take as much medicine. Your health care costs could be lower, and your children will be healthier.

A smoke-free home and community is the best way to protect our children from the effects of secondhand smoke. It takes the whole community to keep our kids safe, and we know you want to be a part of that!



## Pregnancy and Smoking Are Not a Good Mix

If you are pregnant or thinking about having a baby, there is no better time to quit than now. Women who smoke have a harder time getting pregnant. If they do get pregnant, the baby is more likely to have health problems.

Babies born to mothers who smoke:

- Might be smaller than normal at birth
- Are more likely to be born too early (premature birth), which can cause many health problems or even death
- Are more likely to have certain birth defects, such as cleft lip or palate
- Are more likely to die of SIDS.

The good news is that quitting can help you have a healthy, happier pregnancy and baby.

# Are You Addicted to Cigarettes?

The following test will give you an idea of your level of addiction to the nicotine in cigarettes.

**Circle one answer for each question.**

		Points	Your Points
1. How soon after you wake up do you smoke your first cigarette?	Less than 5 minutes	3	
	6–30 minutes	2	
	31–60 minutes	1	
	After 1 hour	0	
2. Do you smoke more frequently in the hours after waking than during the rest of the day?	Yes	1	
	No	0	
3. Do you find it difficult not to smoke?	Yes	1	
	No	0	
4. Which cigarettes would you most hate to give up?	The first one in the morning	1	
	Any other	0	
5. How many cigarettes do you smoke a day?	10 or less	0	
	11–20	1	
	21–30	2	
	31 or more	3	
6. Do you smoke when you're so sick that you're home in bed?	Yes	1	
	No	0	
Your Score			

Your score will help you understand how smoking affects you. The higher your score, the more you rely on the nicotine in your cigarette. If you scored even a single point, you could be dependent on nicotine. If you scored 5 or higher, you may be highly addicted to the nicotine in cigarettes.

Remember, no matter what your score, you will have to work hard to quit. Quitting smoking will take a lot of patience and perseverance, but once you have quit for good, you will be free of your reliance on the nicotine in cigarettes. You will control your life, nicotine won't. This guide will give you the tools to help you.

But don't forget, *no matter how addicted you are, you can stop smoking!*

# Quit Now!

*Smoking harms almost every part of your body.* As a smoker, you are more likely to get many different types of cancer, such as cancer of the lung, head and neck, and stomach, as well as pancreatic, cervical, prostate, and colorectal cancer.

You are also at extra risk for heart attack, heart disease, stroke, pneumonia, emphysema, and ulcers.

Women who smoke can have more trouble getting pregnant and have problems during pregnancy.

Men are more likely to experience erectile dysfunction (ED, or impotence).

## Quit for Your Family

By quitting, you will protect your loved ones from secondhand smoke.

When you quit, you will benefit your family because:

- You will reduce the risk of a member of your family having a heart attack from breathing your secondhand smoke.
- You will protect your loved ones from developing respiratory problems such as asthma, bronchitis, and pneumonia.
- Your home will be cleaner.
- You have a better chance of staying healthy and being an active member of your family.

## Quit for Yourself

Why should you quit now? You can look forward to dramatic changes the moment you quit smoking.

You will add healthy days and years to your life and the lives of your loved ones—time that you can spend together.

## Quitting Benefits Your Health and Your Appearance

*You might not know, but when you smoke, you and the things around you begin to stink.*

*When you quit, you will remove the bad smell from the smoke and cigarette ash that collect around your house, in your car, on your clothes and hair, and even on your children's toys.*

*You can look forward to your physical appearance improving when you quit.*

- *The aging process of your skin will slow down, meaning fewer wrinkles.*
- *The stains on your fingers will disappear.*
- *The stains on your teeth will start to disappear.*

## Within 20 minutes of smoking that last cigarette, your body starts making healthy changes that will continue for years.

### ***20 minutes after quitting***

Your heart rate drops to more normal levels.

### ***12 hours after quitting***

The level of carbon monoxide (a dangerous gas) in your blood returns to normal.

### ***2 weeks to 3 months after quitting***

Your heart attack risk begins to drop. Your lung function begins to improve.

### ***1 to 9 months after quitting***

Your coughing and shortness of breath decrease.

### ***1 year after quitting***

Your added risk of coronary heart disease is half of a smoker's risk.

### ***5 years after quitting***

Your risk of stroke begins to decrease. In 5–15 years, you can reduce your stroke risk to that of a nonsmoker.

### ***10 years after quitting***

Your chance of dying from lung cancer is about half of a smoker's.

### ***15 years after quitting***

Your risk of coronary heart disease is about the same as a nonsmoker's.

## You, Your Money, and Cigarettes

You could save money by quitting smoking. Use this chart to see how much you can save. These amounts are based on a 2012 national average price of about \$6.00 per pack. Depending on where you live, the cost of cigarettes could be more.

		1 Pack Per Day		2 Packs Per Day	
<i>After...</i>		<i>You've Saved...</i>			
	1 day		\$6.00		\$12.00
	1 week		\$42.00		\$83.00
	1 month		\$180.00		\$360.00
	1 year		\$2,190.00		\$4,380.00
	10 years		\$21,900.00		\$43,800.00
	20 years		\$43,800.00		\$87,600.00

### Think About What You Could Do With the Money You Spend on Cigarettes

Many former smokers say that rewards helped them not to smoke during times when quitting was the toughest.

- Save that money for your retirement.
- Help pay for your children's or grandchildren's education.
- Use it for something you never thought you could afford: Go on a trip. Make a down payment on a car. Purchase a new entertainment system.

### You Can Save Even More By Quitting

Almost all insurance premiums are higher for smokers: life, disability, home, fire, and auto. Ask your insurance agent if your rates will go down after you quit.

Smoking adds to the cost of repairing, cleaning, and replacing clothes, rugs, and furniture. One estimate is that the average smoker pays over \$1,000 in these extra costs each year (not counting money spent on cigarettes)!





# Make a List of Reasons to Quit

Now that you have learned how quitting will benefit you and your family, think about your list of reasons to quit. Mark the reasons that are important to you:

## For my family and loved ones:

- I will no longer expose my family and friends to secondhand smoke.
- I will be a better role model for others, especially my kids.
- I will make my family, friends, and coworkers proud of me.
- If I'm pregnant, I will lower my risk of having an unhealthy baby.

## For my health:

- My body will start healing right away.
- I will lower my risk of cancer.
- I will lower my risk of heart attack and stroke.
- I will lower my risk of lung diseases, such as emphysema and chronic bronchitis.
- I will lower my risk of developing cataracts (clouds in the eye that affect vision).
- I will lower the risk of fertility problems.
- I will have whiter teeth and healthier gums.
- I will cough less and breathe easier.

## For myself:

- I will have more money to spend.
- I will feel more in control of my life.
- I will look more attractive and prevent myself from developing premature wrinkles.
- I will have more energy and focus.
- I will feel more physically fit.
- I will be proud of myself.
- I will save time by not taking cigarette breaks, buying cigarettes, or searching for a lighter.

Write down your own reasons:

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## Hang on to your list.

Keep your list where you will see it often. When you reach for a cigarette, find your list of reasons for quitting. Share your list with family and friends. These reasons will remind you why you want to stop.

Good places for your list are:

- where you keep your cigarettes,
- in your wallet or purse,
- in your kitchen, and
- in your car.

# Commit To Quit

Making the decision to quit smoking is the first step to being smoke-free. Cigarettes might have been part of your life for a long time. You can live without them. You will be healthier, happier, and more positive without the addiction to nicotine holding you back.

You might be a little nervous about quitting. That's okay. This guide will help you prepare for your quit day and the days, weeks, and months ahead as you become smoke-free. Smoking is an addiction you can overcome. Millions of other people have done it before you, and you could inspire a few others to quit, too.

Committing to quit is the first step, and one of which you should be very proud. You have made one of the most important decisions of your life!

## Tell Yourself "I'm Ready!"

Take a minute to think again about your own reasons for wanting to quit smoking.

Remember that you might want to quit for yourself and to protect your loved ones. You might want to be a role model for your kids. Watching you become a former smoker might help guide them in their own choices about tobacco. You need to remind yourself often of these reasons to quit because they will help you through the hard times.



## Cutting Down Doesn't Work for Most Smokers

Going from 20 cigarettes per day to 10 per day means you're still feeding your addiction to nicotine. Most people need to stop smoking **completely** on their quit day to become smoke-free.



## This Is Your Decision— Not Anyone Else's!

Nagging or pressure to quit smoking might make you feel resentful or defensive about your decision not to smoke. Don't let these feelings interfere with your own wishes. Tell anyone who pressures you that only you can decide if and when you want to quit. Your reasons for quitting come before anyone else's.

## Set a Quit Date

Now that you've committed to quit smoking, your next step is to set a quit date. Try to set a date that is not too far away—the sooner, the better. You have already made the decision to quit, so now it's time to take some action.

Some people set quit dates that are also special occasions. You might want to quit on your birthday, your anniversary, on a holiday, or on a day celebrated by your friends or community.

Pick a date with which you are comfortable but remember that there is no perfect time. Life is filled with ups and downs, so maybe today is the day or maybe the day is not too far away.

You might be more likely to quit for good if you start to think carefully about your nicotine addiction and your smoking patterns before you quit. Then you can use that information to make a plan of action. Read on about how you can do this.

**My quit day is:**

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### Cigars, Pipes and Chew

Maybe in addition to cigarettes you also occasionally smoke a cigar, pipe, or chew tobacco. As it turns out, cigars and pipes are just as harmful to your body as cigarettes. Cigars may even release more toxic secondhand smoke than cigarettes to those around you. Even if you feel you do not inhale the smoke, you can still be at risk for mouth and throat cancers, among others.

Older adults who smoke cigars are at a greater risk for heart disease than nonsmokers. Pipe smoking can also increase risks for stroke in addition to heart disease. Cigars and pipes are not healthy alternatives to cigarettes and may lead to many of the same diseases as cigarettes.

If you also use smokeless forms of tobacco like chewing tobacco or snuff, you are still putting yourself at risk for oral health problems and cancer. Just because these products do not involve smoke, doesn't mean they are safe. Smokeless tobacco is addictive and isn't a healthier substitute for cigarettes.

The best way to protect yourself from the harms related to tobacco products is to quit altogether!



**Now that you have picked your quit day, you need to have a solid quit plan in place.**

## Build Your Quit Plan

Now that you have picked your quit day, you need to have a solid quit plan in place.

The first thing to remember is that quitting smoking really means stopping smoking, not cutting back. People who just cut back on cigarettes usually go back to their normal levels of smoking. Quitting completely with help of some kind is recommended. For example, your doctor could help you make a plan that is right for you.

The following pages give details on quit strategies and tools and ways to use them before and after your quit day. These methods have been shown to work alone or in combination.

**“Light” Cigarettes Are Not Light!**

Switching to a different type of cigarette will not help you quit! Also, switching to a “light” brand won’t reduce your risk of developing a tobacco-caused disease. There is no such thing as a safe cigarette.

# Get Support To Help You Quit

The people you know can give you support when you quit smoking. The African-American community has a history of strength and the ability to overcome hard times, strong ties to faith and the church, and a strong sense of community. Use the strengths of your heritage to help you quit smoking.

## Talk to Your Family and Friends

Once you've made the decision to quit smoking, it's time to build your support system. Many smokers are afraid to tell others they're quitting because they worry about what people will think if they start smoking again. But people who get support from family and friends usually have an easier time quitting smoking and staying smoke-free.

### Identify people in your life who can help, such as:

- Your spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend
- People in your religious or community groups
- Family members
- Nonsmoking friends and friends who are former smokers

## Menthol

Think "minty fresh" menthol cigarettes are safer than regular cigarettes? Think again. Tobacco companies add flavors to hide the harsh taste of cigarettes. The truth is menthol cigarettes are just as bad for your health as regular cigarettes.

- Coworkers
- Neighbors and other people you trust in your community.

Let these people become your support team and let them know how they can help. Tell them that you might not be your normal self for a few days or weeks after you quit. Ask them to be patient with you.

Be specific about ways your support team can help. Only you know what kind of support will be best for you.



**Suggest ways your support team can help you while you quit.**

- Add to your supply of cigarette substitutes (for example, gum, pretzels, whatever you prefer).
- Help you change routines to cut down temptations to smoke, like joining you for a walk after a meal.
- Remind you of the progress you've made.
- Tell you things will get easier.
- Ask how you are doing and let you know they care.



**Suggest ways they can keep from getting in your way, such as:**

- Not doubting that you can quit or stay smoke-free
- Never offering you a cigarette
- Not joking about you going back to smoking
- Not criticizing your smoking or your efforts to quit.

**People Who *Do Not* Support You**

There could be some people in your life who won't support you. Dealing with your friends who smoke could take some extra effort. You might want to let them know that just because you are quitting doesn't mean they have to. Your decision to quit is a personal one.

Let them know that they can help in other ways by:

- Never offering you a cigarette, even in a kidding way
- Not smoking around you, especially when you are in the car or at the dinner table
- Understanding if you need to stay away from events where you used to smoke.



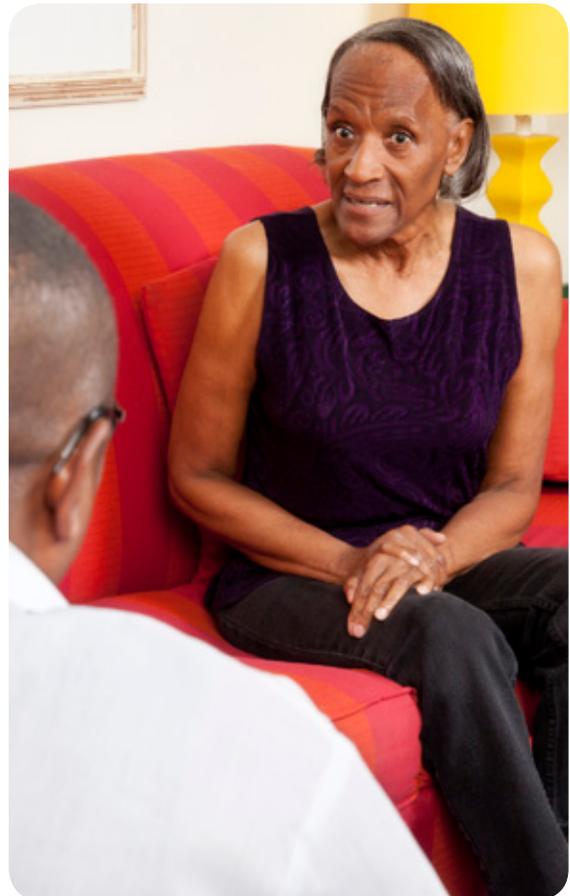
**You Know Former Smokers!**

Find some former smokers in your life. Ask them to tell you their stories about how they felt after quitting. Talk to them as you go from smoker to nonsmoker. They can give you inspiration, support, encouragement, and tips.

# Dealing With Others While You Quit

Here are some possible scenarios and tips on how to deal with rough times with family, friends, and coworkers while you are trying to quit smoking.

- **You tried to quit a few times before and went back to smoking. This time you want to quit for good. Your friends keep saying, “You’ll never make it. You always go back.”**
  - You can tell your friends that you might have gone back before but that practice makes perfect. Maybe the third time’s the charm? Experts say that many successful former smokers need to try several times before they quit for good. This time you’re ready, and you will make it.
- **You want to stop smoking and have set a quit day. Your boyfriend smokes and so do a lot of your friends. Without being rude, how can you say “no” when they offer you a cigarette?**
  - You are saying “no” to help yourself, not to offend others. Saying “no thanks” is usually enough. Remind them that you’re quitting smoking.
- **You quit smoking a few days ago. You are doing all right, except that you have been tense than usual. Your wife went out last night and bought a pack of cigarettes. She says she wants her “normal” husband back. What can you do?**
  - Some people feel very tense when they first quit smoking, but “this too shall pass.” Ask your spouse and loved ones to bear with you for a while. The extra years of being happy with you are worth a few days of dealing with your tension.
- **You have wanted to quit for a while, and last week you finally did it. The guys at work all smoke and keep offering you cigarettes. They keep telling you that just one won’t hurt. You don’t want to lose your friends, but you have come too far to go back.**
  - It can be tough to be around smokers when you are trying to quit. You might say, “Just because I quit doesn’t mean you have to, but I don’t want a cigarette.” Don’t be fooled. Just one cigarette will hurt your attempt to quit.



# Other Sources of Support

## Call a Smoking Quitline

Quitlines are *free*, anonymous telephone counseling services. These programs have helped more than 3 million smokers. When you call a quitline, you talk to a trained counselor who can help you develop a strategy for quitting or can help you stay on track. The counselor can provide material that could improve your chances of quitting.

- You can call NCI's Smoking Quitline at (877) 44U-QUIT or (877) 448-7848 between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. (Eastern Time).
- You can also call your state's quitline. Call (800) QUIT-NOW or (800) 784-8669 to be connected with free resources about quitting and information about counseling in your state.

## Visit a Quit-Smoking Website

- **Smokefree.gov**  
(<http://smokefree.gov/>)
- **Smokefree Women**  
(<http://women.smokefree.gov/>)
- **Smokefree Teen**  
(<http://teen.smokefree.gov>)
- **Be Tobacco Free**  
(<http://betobaccofree.hhs.gov>)

At these websites, you can find free, accurate information and professional assistance meant to help support the immediate and long-term needs of people trying to quit smoking.

Most states also have quit-smoking websites that have resources to help you quit.

## Chat With an Online Counselor

You can chat online with a quit-smoking counselor through NCI's LiveHelp instant-messaging service.

- This *free* service provides personalized information and advice to help you quit smoking.
- Trained specialists are available to chat Monday through Friday between 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. (Eastern Time) at [https://livehelp.cancer.gov/app/chat/chat\\_launch](https://livehelp.cancer.gov/app/chat/chat_launch).



# Medications To Help You Quit Smoking

Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) is a small, controlled dose of nicotine that works by replacing some of the nicotine you crave. NRT products do not contain the other harmful chemicals in cigarette smoke. Other medications can reduce your withdrawal symptoms and urges to smoke.

Medications work best as part of a planned program to quit (such as with this guide). Whatever medications you use, they shouldn't be your only support.

To quit for good, use the other ideas in this booklet to fight smoking urges and to learn new ways of coping with tension, boredom, and pressure to smoke.

## Take It 1 Day at a Time

Quitting smoking is something you need to take 1 day at a time. Focus on just today. Do this each day and remember that you're making progress. You're improving your health with every cigarette you don't smoke.



## What Is Combination Therapy?

One of the main reasons people are not successful when they use medications as a tool to quit is that they are not getting enough of the medicine to help fight cravings or to reduce their withdrawal symptoms.

For some smokers, doctors could suggest a combination of two NRTs or an NRT with a prescription medication. For example, using the patch as your main NRT medicine to reduce your withdrawal symptoms and then adding the nicotine gum to help you when you have strong cravings might be the best strategy for you.



Medication	How It Works	Prescription Required?
Patch	The nicotine patch is placed on the skin and supplies a small and steady amount of nicotine to the body. Patches help the user reduce the nicotine dose over time.	No
Gum	Nicotine gum is chewed to release nicotine that is absorbed through tissue inside the mouth. The user chews the gum until it produces a tingling feeling and then places it between the cheek and gum tissue.	No
Lozenge	Nicotine lozenges look like hard candy and are placed in the mouth to dissolve slowly. The nicotine lozenge releases nicotine as it slowly dissolves in the mouth.	No
Nasal Spray	Nicotine nasal spray is a pump bottle containing nicotine; it is inserted into the nose and sprayed. Nicotine nasal spray can be used for fast-craving control, especially for heavy smokers.	Yes
Inhaler	A nicotine inhaler is a cartridge attached to a mouthpiece. Inhaling through the mouthpiece delivers a specific amount of nicotine to the user.	Yes
Bupropion*	Bupropion helps reduce nicotine withdrawal symptoms and the urge to smoke. Bupropion does not contain nicotine and can be used safely with nicotine replacement products.	Yes
Varenicline*	Varenicline is a prescription medication that eases nicotine withdrawal symptoms and blocks the effects of nicotine from cigarettes if the user starts smoking again. Varenicline does not contain nicotine.	Yes

*For the most currently updated information on these medications, including side effects and precautions, you can visit [www.smokefree.gov/medication-guide.aspx](http://www.smokefree.gov/medication-guide.aspx).*

*\* Bupropion and varenicline are generic drug names. Talk to your doctor about these or equivalent brand name medications that may be right for you.*

# My Quitting Worksheet: Get Ready to Quit!

My quit date is \_\_\_\_\_ .

The family, friends, and coworkers I want to tell are:

---

I can distract myself during urges and cravings by:

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## 1. Pick the quit methods you are interested in (you may pick more than one):

- Support from loved ones
- Quitlines
- Quit websites
- Over-the-counter medication (gum, patch, lozenges)
- Prescription medication

## 2. Smoke-proof your life.

- Throw away all your cigarettes—every one of them. Get them out of hiding places, too.
- Get rid of cigarette cases, ashtrays, lighters, and matches.
- Replace ash trays with cigarette substitutes or healthy snacks, even in the car.

## 3. Other things you can do:

- Review your reasons for quitting. Some people like to carry their lists with them. Have you found new reasons since you first made the list? Add those!
- Plan ways to reward yourself for milestones, such as 1 week, 1 month, 3 months, 6 months, and 1 year without smoking. Put your cigarette money in a jar each day you are smoke-free. Then treat yourself to something you want.
- If you are planning to use medication, make sure you have filled and picked up your prescription and that you have any of the over-the-counter NRTs you plan to use.
- Get a good night's sleep.
- Start your day with exercise. Exercise is great substitute for smoking. How about a brisk walk?



**I can do anything for this 1 day. All I have to do is just not smoke today.**

## Your Quit Day: Today Is Your Day!

Here it is—quit day! You have already learned a lot about quitting smoking, and you're ready to face the temptations.

If you haven't done so already, go around the house and car and get rid of any cigarettes, ashtrays, lighters, and matches. You don't need those things now.

The most important thing to do on your quit day is be good to yourself. The very first day and even the first weeks after your quit day can be hard. Take it 1 day or even 1 hour at a time.

### **Fight Your Addiction**

Now that your quit day is here, the following pages will help you deal with the tough times ahead. You will learn how to:

- Combat withdrawal and cravings.
- Find other things to do besides smoke.

During the first few days or weeks without cigarettes, people often feel overwhelmed by the idea of never smoking a cigarette again.

When you have the urge to smoke, it helps to focus on not smoking *right now*. It can be tough at first, but things will get better soon.

### **Prayer for the First Day**

I don't have to quit forever; all I have to do is just not smoke today. I can do anything for this 1 day. Nothing will be too much for me. I can focus on just 1 hour at a time if I have to. I can survive 60 minutes at a time without a cigarette. I will do whatever I need to not smoke a cigarette today.

# Push Back Against Withdrawal

Sometimes people who are successful at first will give in and smoke within 1 or 2 weeks—usually because of withdrawal and intense cravings. Know what to expect and how to cope. Pushing back against withdrawal and cravings is a must in this part of quitting.

## What Is Withdrawal?

Withdrawal is what your brain and body go through when they don't have enough nicotine. You start to enter nicotine withdrawal after about 30 minutes of smoking your last cigarette. You might feel lightheaded, irritable, sad, and/or angry. You will likely have strong cravings to smoke a cigarette. Withdrawal can make people go back to smoking when they try to quit, but if you don't smoke, "this too shall pass."

Withdrawal is normal for people who are trying to quit. It can be unpleasant, but withdrawal is not dangerous. The first week is usually the hardest. After 2 weeks, many withdrawal symptoms will have gone away, and your urges to smoke will be weaker and farther apart.

It might not feel like it, but withdrawal is a good sign of recovery. Withdrawal does not last forever.

The following is a list of common withdrawal symptoms and ways to cope.

- **Feeling irritable and tense, having trouble concentrating, feeling "out of it"**

These feelings will pass. Go easy on yourself. *Try: Taking a break or walking away from the situation. Reminding friends, family, and coworkers that you are not upset with them. Taking deep breaths and/or exercising to help you blow off steam.*

- **Restlessness or extra energy, trouble sleeping at night, or drowsiness during the day**

For many smokers, withdrawal causes sleeping difficulties. Your body is rebounding. You can use this extra energy for exercise, and in turn,

exercising will help you sleep at night. *Try: Breathing deeply. Avoiding drinks with caffeine. Taking a short walk.*

- **More coughing than normal**

This could mean your lungs are clearing themselves out. This is a good sign! *Try: Sipping some warm herbal tea.*

- **Feeling anxious, nervous, or restless**

These symptoms are common in the first few days. *Try: Taking a warm bath, drinking some water, or having some quiet time.*

Withdrawal symptoms and the intense cravings to smoke will go away! Withdrawal can be tough while it lasts, but think about how you will benefit after withdrawal passes.

## Relax Without a Cigarette

Taking a deep breath can help control the urge to smoke or make you feel less tense after quitting. Here are two ways to act on that old saying, "Take a deep breath and count to 10."

### 1-Minute Vacation

- Close your eyes.
- Take a deep, slow breath through your nose. As you inhale, picture yourself in a favorite, restful spot.
- Exhale slowly through your mouth, holding that scene in your mind.
- Enjoy the pleasure of that scene.
- Open your eyes and feel refreshed.

### More Than 1 Minute

When you have more time, combine deep breathing with:

- Relaxing music
- A bath or shower
- A rest in the shade.

# Fight Urges and Cravings



To resist the urges and cravings you feel, tell yourself that the urge to smoke will pass, usually in just a few minutes. These urges will come less often, and then they become weaker. The more time you spend in any situation as a nonsmoker the less you will be bothered by urges.

## What Causes Your Urges?

Some parts of your daily routine could cause you to feel an urge to smoke. These are known as “trigger situations.” If you know your triggers, you have a head start on finding ways to deal with situations that tempt you to smoke or to avoid them altogether.

Think about when, where, and why you light up. You can use the Quit Journal for this activity, too. Thinking about these things can help you identify your “trigger situations.”

## Identify Your Trigger Situations

- Waking in the morning
- Drinking coffee, tea, or alcohol
- Smelling a cigarette
- Being with other smokers
- Seeing someone smoke
- Taking a break
- Talking on the phone
- Checking e-mail
- Surfing the Internet
- Watching TV
- Driving a car
- Being a passenger in a car
- After eating
- After completing a task
- Feeling stressed
- Feeling lonely or depressed
- Being or feeling less tolerant
- Feeling bored
- Feeling angry, irritable, or impatient
- (Other) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Fighting cravings will be hard at first, but it will be easier if you are prepared. When facing a craving or urge, be sure to change the situation. Read the next page for more ideas on what you can do when you have the urge to smoke.

## Bars and Alcohol Can Trigger Cravings

It is a good idea to avoid bars and to stop drinking alcohol for the first few weeks after your quit day. For many people, a bar is a place that triggers a craving for a cigarette. If you do drink, keep in mind that just one or two drinks could weaken your resolve to stay quit. Don't forget that excessive alcohol use (four or more drinks per day) can lead to increased risk of health problems, such as liver diseases and cancer as well as injuries and violence.

A photograph of an older African American couple walking outdoors in a park-like setting. The man is wearing a pink short-sleeved button-down shirt and the woman is wearing a white short-sleeved top. They are both smiling broadly. A large orange circle with a white border is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing text.

**Did you remember  
to remove all  
cigarettes and other  
tobacco products  
from your home, car,  
and workplace?**

## Solutions to Urges and Cravings

Now that you have identified your trigger situations, you can be prepared to do something else instead of smoke during these times. Here are a few ideas to help keep you smoke-free.

### **Quick Fixes: On-the-Spot Distractions**

- Get up and take a walk. Fresh air and exercise can help clear your head.
- Call, text, or visit a loved one. Whether or not you tell them that you are craving a cigarette, having a conversation will distract you and will allow the craving to pass.
- Keep smoking substitutes handy. Try sugarless gum and candy, flavored toothpicks, or breath mints.
- Write in the Quit Journal located in the back of this guide.
- Distract yourself! Try reading a magazine or listening to your favorite music.
- Breathe deeply and take a 1-minute vacation.
- Say a prayer or meditate.



# Fight Cravings and Withdrawal With Exercise

Regular exercise can help you cope with cravings and withdrawal symptoms. It can help you when you feel stressed. Walking burns calories and keeps your muscles and bones strong. With exercise, you will sleep better and have more energy.

Try playing a pickup game of basketball with your family. This way you can bond while fighting your craving for cigarettes. Whatever activity you choose, your goal should be 2½ hours per week of moderately intense activity, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

## How Many Calories Are You Burning?

Activity	Approximate Calories Burned Per 30 Minutes*
Basketball (high intensity)	220
Dancing	165
Light gardening/yard work	165
Bicycling (< 10 mph)	145
Walking (3.5 mph)	140
Weight lifting (light workout)	110
Stretching	90

*\*This is the number of calories burned in 30 minutes for a person who weighs 154 lbs. Calories burned will be higher for people who weigh more than 154 lbs. and lower for people who weigh less. This chart was adapted from the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.*

## Fight Weight Gain

You might worry that you will gain weight after you quit. You should know that not everyone gains weight, and those who do usually gain fewer than 10 pounds. This is because your body's metabolism could slow down, and your appetite could increase.

## Exercise Is Medicine

Physical activity also helps reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes, heart attack, stroke, and several forms of cancer and helps reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety, among other benefits.



There are ways to limit weight gain to a few pounds:

- Know that smoking dulls your sense of smell and taste. You will enjoy your food more after you quit. Take more time to enjoy your food but don't eat more food.
- Keep active to help your body burn up those extra calories.
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about nicotine gum or prescription medications. They might be able to help delay weight gain.
- Try to relax a little about your weight and focus on quitting.

# Prevent Yourself From Having Just One Cigarette

Slip-ups happen to some former smokers. This does not mean you are a failure or that you can't quit smoking. Treat the slip-up as a mistake, learn from it, and start quitting again.

What made you want that cigarette? Was it stress? Was it boredom? Look back at your list of smoking triggers and see if it was one of the things you listed.

## **A cigarette will not get you through tough times.**

The highest risk times for new quitters are when they are feeling stressed, angry, lonely, depressed, or negative—when things are going badly. These times should act as a warning sign and should let you know to be on guard. If you smoke, you will be letting yourself down, and you might feel worse.

## **Cravings will go away, whether you smoke or not.**

What should you do when you are with friends who smoke and you want to reach for a cigarette? Get something else in your hand—a toothpick, pen, piece of gum—anything to take the place of that cigarette. Breathe deeply, meditate, or turn to prayer. Distract yourself for the next few minutes. Remember, the urge to smoke will pass, whether you light up or not.

## **One cigarette does not make you a smoker again.**

Don't let that one cigarette be an excuse for going back to smoking. Just because you had one cigarette does not mean you are a smoker again. Think about how far you have come. Pick yourself up again. The important thing is to learn from the slip.

## **What Should You Do?**

You need to do what is best for you. For a lot of former smokers, it helps to share feelings. Others turn to prayer.



## **You Can Do This**

If you make a mistake, it is not the end of the world. Learn from the slip. You will have more confidence the next time you face temptation.

# If You Go Back to Smoking ... Try Quitting Again!

If you go back to smoking, it doesn't mean you're a failure. Don't toss aside your attempt as worthless. Use it to try again and succeed. If you have quit smoking for just 24 hours in the last few months or weeks, you have doubled your chances of quitting for good in the coming year!

Set a new quit day as soon as possible. Research has shown that many people don't quit for good on the first try. They need a few tries.

Think of your quit attempt as a learning experience. Learn from it. You will be more likely to quit for good the next time. Don't give up!

Feel good about what went right in your quit attempt.

## **Make a plan for what you will do differently the next time:**

- Set a new quit day and tell your friends and family.
- Remember why you want to quit. Look back at your list of reasons.
- Think of the health benefits you can expect from quitting, especially if you are currently suffering from a tobacco-related illness.



- Figure out what went wrong. Did you need more support? Did you rely too much on willpower and not enough on changing your routine?
- Make a plan for how you will deal with tough times the next time you quit. Know what you will do when it's tough to resist smoking.
- Talk with former smokers you know about how they did it. Let them help you.
- Try deep breathing when you feel stressed.

**Visit [Smokefree.gov](https://www.smokefree.gov) to get support and information on quitting.**

**Think of your quit attempt as a learning experience. Learn from it. You will be more likely to quit for good the next time. Don't give up!**

## **Don't Forget, You Have Support!**

- Talk to your family and friends or spiritual community.
- Ask your doctor for help. One or two visits can help you through the toughest part of quitting.
- You can call the NCI quitline at (877) 44U-QUIT or (877) 448-7848 and your state's quitline at (800) QUIT-NOW or (800) 784-8669.
- These are nationwide, toll-free numbers with specially trained staff members who can provide you with free, personal assistance in quitting as well as information on how to find quit-smoking services in your community.



**You Have Stopped  
Smoking—  
Congratulations!**

## A New Life Path

### **You Have Stopped Smoking— Congratulations!**

You've faced one of the toughest tests out there. Remind yourself of this, and be proud of yourself. Give yourself a pat on the back—you've earned it.

You should be enjoying many of the benefits of quitting: less coughing, more energy, no longer feeling tied down by cigarettes, and more self-respect. Most importantly, nicotine addiction is no longer part of your life. You are no longer at the mercy of smoking. You'll feel healthier and happier

and so will your wallet! Think about those who live with you; you're protecting them. If they are not around your smoke, they'll be healthier and happier, too.

There will be some tough moments ahead, but you can make it through. Keep on your guard for temptations and protect yourself.

Congratulations on becoming one of the millions of former smokers in the country. You have made one of the biggest decisions in your life and made a great change.

# For More Information

## **NCI Quit-Smoking Websites**

- Smokefree.gov (<http://smokefree.gov/>)
- Smokefree Women (<http://women.smokefree.gov/>)
- Smokefree Teen (<http://teen.smokefree.gov/>)

Smokefree.gov and its partner sites are intended to help you or someone you care about quit smoking. Different people need different resources as they try to quit. The information and professional assistance available on these websites can help support both your immediate and long-term needs as you become, and remain, a nonsmoker.

## **HHS Website**

- Be Tobacco Free (<http://betobaccofree.hhs.gov>)

Visit Be Tobacco Free which provides information on tobacco and quitting from various Department of Health and Human Services operating and staff divisions.

## **Smoking Quitlines**

- National Cancer Institute: (877) 44U-QUIT or (877) 448-7848
- Your state's quitline: (800) QUIT-NOW or (800) 784-8669

These are nationwide, toll-free numbers with specially trained staff members who can provide you with free, individualized assistance in quitting.

## **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

- <http://www.cdc.gov/>

The Office on Smoking and Health, a program office within CDC, provides booklets on smoking topics, such as relapse, ways to help a friend or family member quit smoking, the health hazards of smoking, and the effects of parental smoking on teenagers. Check on line or call (800) CDC-INFO or (800) 232-4636) for more information.

## **U.S. Food and Drug Administration**

- <http://www.fda.gov/TobaccoProducts/default.htm>

The Center for Tobacco Products within the Food and Drug Administration oversees the implementation of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act. Some of the agency's responsibilities under the law include reviewing premarket applications for new and modified-risk tobacco products, requiring new warning labels, and establishing and enforcing advertising and promotion activities.

# My Quit Journal

A quit journal can help you track your progress while you are quitting smoking.

Check for patterns. You might find triggers of which you aren't even aware. Understanding what tempts you to smoke will help you control the craving to smoke before it hits. Writing in the journal will also keep you busy as you fight a craving.

You can write in the journal in this booklet or make your own. Keep your journal with you so that you can easily use it. Be sure to record the time you have a craving to smoke, where you are, what you are doing, and what you are thinking or feeling. Rate how much you want the cigarette each time you have a craving.

Days Since I Quit	Craving Level	Time of Day	What I Was Doing...	Who I Was With...	My Mood...
<i>Example</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>10:45</i>	<i>At work</i>	<i>Alone</i>	<i>Stressed</i>
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					
15					
16					
17					
18					
19					
20					

0 No cravings    1 Just a little    2 Some    3 A lot

Try this activity for at least a few days, making sure to record 1 day during the week and 1 day on the weekend. You might even find that the time you take to complete the journal helps you smoke less.

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