

Stop smoking



Quitting smoking is one of the most important things you can do to reduce your risk of cancer. Tobacco smoke contains more than 4000 chemicals, including over 60 carcinogens or chemicals known to cause cancer. When you inhale cigarette smoke these chemicals enter your lungs and spread through your body.

There are immediate health benefits as soon as you put out your last cigarette, even if you already suffer health problems.

Reasons to quit

- Twelve hours after stopping, almost all nicotine is out of your system with most by-products gone within five days.
- After 24 hours, the level of carbon monoxide in your blood has dropped dramatically, meaning your body can take and use oxygen more efficiently.
- After two days, your taste and smell start to return.
- After two months, blood flow to your hands and feet improves.
- After one year, there is a rapid decline in your risk of heart disease.
- After 10 years, your risk of lung cancer is reduced by half.

Quitting

Many smokers need to practise quitting several times before they give up for good. The best advice is to keep trying. Practice helps smokers plan what to do the next time they get an urge to smoke.

Approaches to quitting

Cold turkey

For many people cold turkey is the most successful way of quitting. This means stopping completely without cutting down.

Nicotine replacement therapy

Using nicotine gum, patches, lozenges, tablets or inhalers may be useful for heavy smokers, though most smokers quit by themselves. Your doctor or pharmacist will explain how to use these products.

Prescription drugs to help

Prescription medications, such as bupropion, can help to reduce withdrawal symptoms when you quit, such as cravings, irritability, and anxiety. But it may not stop these symptoms completely.

Alternative therapies

While there is often interest in herbal remedies, spiritual healing or other alternative therapies, there is insufficient evidence on the effectiveness of these methods for quitting.

Recommendations

- Choose a method that is safe, effective and suits you.
- Be wary of methods or products that promise success without you having to do anything or that make exaggerated claims of success rates.
- Nicotine is highly addictive and while various products can assist a person to quit smoking, there is no easy fix.

Coping with recovery symptoms

The first few days of quitting can be the hardest, as you may feel tired, irritable and tense. After about one to two weeks most of these symptoms will disappear. Few people quit without experiencing cravings.

The four Ds can assist:

Delay acting on the urge to smoke. After five minutes, the urge to smoke weakens.

Deep breaths, breathe in and out slowly and deeply, and repeat three times.

Drink water, sipping slowly, holding it in the mouth a little longer to savour the taste.

Do something else to take the focus off smoking. Listen to music, exercise or talk to a friend. After quitting smoking, being more active is the best thing you can do for general health and wellbeing.

Remember, if you have any concerns or questions, please contact your doctor.

Ways to reduce your cancer risk

How do you stack up?

(Tick if you need to take action)

- Quit smoking
- Be SunSmart
- Maintain a healthy body weight
- Be more physically active
- Eat a healthy, well balanced diet
- Avoid or limit alcohol intake

Where can I get reliable information?

National Quitline: 13 78 48 (13 QUIT)

Quit because you can website:
www.quitbecauseyoucan.org.au

Cancer Council Australia website
(with links to state and territory Cancer Councils)
www.cancer.org.au