

AMA Healthier Life Steps™

A physician-patient alliance for a longer, healthier life

Action plan for quitting smoking

The goal

A healthy adult should not use any tobacco products at all.

Getting ready

You indicated that you're ready to take steps to quit smoking to improve your health. Remember, even if you don't quit now, it's never too late.

You might feel that you won't be able to quit because you may have tried a number of times before. Achieving success takes time. So don't get discouraged if you don't quit after just one try. Every time you try to quit, you increase the likelihood that you will succeed.

If you're not ready today to begin your quit smoking plan, there are some places you can get information on the health problems caused by smoking. See "Useful resources" at the end of this plan for contact information.

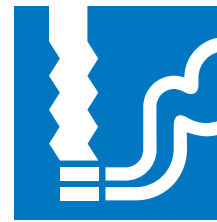
Make an action plan to quit smoking

Although most people know about the risk of lung cancer from smoking, many don't realize how smoking can lead to many other illnesses. All of the conditions below can be helped by quitting smoking. Do you have any of these medical conditions or problems?

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Family history of heart problems
- High cholesterol
- Asthma or bronchitis
- Ulcers, sinus problems
- Dental health problems
- Osteoporosis
- Drinking too much

Plan to make quitting a priority

List the top three reasons why you haven't quit smoking. Do these reasons make sense? Now make a list of three reasons to quit smoking and compare your lists. Deciding to quit smoking works best when you know why you want to quit. Keep these lists handy to remind you of the good decision you've made.



The top three reasons I haven't quit:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The top three reasons I want to quit:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Cutting down?

Sometimes smokers think cutting down will reduce their risks related to smoking. Cutting down doesn't reduce your risks. There is no safe level of smoking, but knowing you can cut out some cigarettes can help you realize that you can live without them. Taking the final leap to a smoke-free life is best for your health.

Taking action

I will set a quit date and stick to it—not even a single puff!

- My quit date:

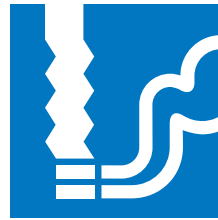
When I think about past attempts to quit,

- What worked?

- What didn't?

To get support and encouragement I will:

- Tell my family, friends and coworkers I am quitting.
- Talk to my doctor or other health care provider.
- Get group or individual counseling.
- Call the national quit line at 1-800-QUIT NOW.
- Others who can help me:



Helpful hints I can use: *(Fill in your ideas.)*

- Change my routine

- Join a support group

- Reduce stress

- Distract myself from urges to smoke

- Plan something enjoyable to do every day

- Drink a lot of water and other fluids

I will talk with my health care provider about which medication might help and how to use it.

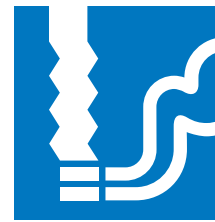
- Bupropion SR—available by prescription
- Varenicline—available by prescription
- Nicotine inhaler—available by prescription.
- Nicotine nasal spray—available by prescription
- Nicotine gum—available over-the-counter
- Nicotine patch—available over-the-counter
- Nicotine lozenge—available over-the-counter

My medication plan:

- Medications

- Instructions

Track your efforts and achievements on your Progress Tracking Calendar.



Keep going

Most relapses occur within the first three months after quitting. Don't be discouraged if you start smoking again. Remember, most people try several times before they finally quit. Here are some difficult situations to watch for¹:

- **Alcohol.** Avoid drinking alcohol. Drinking lowers your chances of success. It can weaken your resolve and may even trigger a craving for smoking.
- **Other smokers.** Being around smoking can make you want to smoke.
- **Weight gain.** Many smokers will gain weight when they quit, usually less than 10 pounds. Don't let weight gain distract you from your main goal—to quit smoking. You can help by eating a healthy diet and staying active. Some quit-smoking medications may also help delay weight gain.
- **Bad mood or depression.** There are a lot of ways to improve your mood other than smoking.

If you're having problems with any of these situations, talk to your physician or other health care provider.

Factors for success

When quitting, remember:

- Nicotine is a powerful addiction.
- Quitting is hard, but don't give up.
 - Many people try two or three times before they quit for good.
 - Each time you try to quit, the more likely you are to succeed.

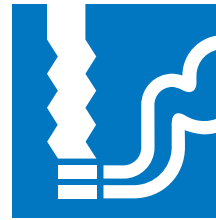
Good reasons for quitting

- You will live longer and live healthier.
- The people you live with will be healthier.
- You will have more energy and breathe easier.
- You will lower your risk of heart attack, stroke or cancer.

Tips to help you quit

- Get rid of *all* cigarettes and ashtrays in your home, car or workplace.
- Ask your family, friends and coworkers for support.
- Avoid smoky situations.
- Breathe in deeply when you feel the urge to smoke.
- Keep busy.
- Reward yourself often.

¹Adapted from clinician and patient materials at the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (Rockville, MD) website: *Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence*. <http://www.ahrq.gov/path/tobacco.htm>



Quit and save money

- If you smoked one pack per day at over \$5 per pack, you would save more than \$1,825 each year and more than \$18,000 in 10 years.
- What else could you do with this money?

Useful resources

- **“Freedom from Smoking® Online”**
Free smoking cessation program from the American Lung Association
 - www.FFSonline.org
- **Quitnet® smoking cessation website** (*a small fee may apply*)
 - www.QuitNet.com
- **Many local and state health departments offer smoking cessation information free.**
- **For smoking cessation support groups (and additional pamphlets and information), call:**
 - Your local American Lung Association 1-800-LUNGUSA
 - American Cancer Society 1-800-ACS-2345
 - Your local or state health department or hospital for the program nearest you
- **Self-help materials are also available at:**
 - www.cdc.gov/tobacco
 - www.smokefree.gov
 - www.becomeanex.com
- **If you’re not ready today to begin your quit smoking plan, there are some places you can get information on the health problems caused by smoking:**
 - The American Lung Association (1-800-LUNG-USA)
 - The American Heart Association (1-800-AHA-USA-1)
 - The American Cancer Society (1-800-ACS- 2345)
- **You can call a toll-free quit line where you can talk with someone about smoking and quitting at no cost:**
 - 1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800 -784-8669)