

A Tobacco-Free Future



Quitting tobacco is one of the most important steps you can take to improve your health. When you quit, you will have more time, energy, money and freedom! Every year, millions of Americans break the habit.

This guide offers:

Health benefits of quitting smoking
Information about stopping tobacco use
Strategies to stay tobacco-free
Resources to help you quit

Health benefits of quitting smoking tobacco

Within minutes, your blood pressure and heart rate improve.

Within 12 hours, your carbon monoxide blood levels drop to normal, allowing more oxygen to get to your lungs and begin healing.

Within weeks to months, your risk of heart attack begins to drop and lung function begins to improve.

Within one year, your risk of heart attack and stroke is cut in half.

Within 10 years, your risk of lung cancer is cut in half.

Within 15 years, your risk of heart disease is the same as someone who has never smoked.

Stopping tobacco use

Successfully quitting can take five to seven attempts—don't give up!

Tobacco use is part of a routine, and changing a routine is challenging at first.

Be prepared and stay positive. Identify your triggers. These could be objects such as coffee, your car or your computer, or emotions such as stress, boredom, or loneliness.

Identify and avoid high-risk situations, such as being around people who smoke or use tobacco, or drinking alcohol or caffeine.

Nicotine—the addictive drug in tobacco—makes wanting to stop more difficult. Common withdrawal symptoms such as hunger, fatigue, irritation, anxiety, depression, insomnia and trouble concentrating peak within three to five days of stopping tobacco use, and generally subside within a few weeks.

Talk with your healthcare provider about how to manage withdrawal symptoms. Professional help and medicine can ease symptoms, decrease your urge to use tobacco and greatly increase your chance of success.

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Strategies to stay tobacco-free

If you have recently quit using tobacco, congratulations! Once you've quit, it is important to stay tobacco-free.

To stay tobacco-free:

Let your friends and family know you quit. Finding support will improve your chances of success.

Remove smoking reminders. Get rid of your cigarettes, matches, ashtrays and lighters. Clean your home and car to remove the smell of cigarettes.

Write down your reasons for quitting. Your health, family and finances are great examples.

How to deal with cravings

Plan ahead. Avoid trigger situations.

Remember, cravings will come and go. They rarely last more than three to five minutes.

Distract yourself—keep busy. Try walking, deep breathing, starting a new hobby or exercising.

Seek support from your friends and family.

Use medications approved by your physician to help you quit.

Go to a smoke-free zone (movie theaters, restaurants, parks or museums).

Stay focused and positive, and remind yourself why you quit.

Resources to help you quit

Cigarette smoking is one of the most difficult addictions to overcome. Northwestern Medicine offers a variety of cessation programs and tools to aid tobacco users on their journey to be smoke- and tobacco-free. Services are available at the following north suburban locations:

Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital
1000 North Westmoreland Road
North Entrance
Lake Forest

Northwestern Grayslake Outpatient Center
1475 East Belvidere Road
Grayslake

For more information, call 224-271-6145. TTY for the hearing impaired 312.926.6363.

Other helpful resources

The Illinois Tobacco Quitline offers free personal help at quityes.org or by phone at 866.QUIT.YES.

Useful websites:

- smokefree.gov
- cdc.gov
- cancer.gov

Welcome to a tobacco-free future!