

Canning Thoracic Institute

A Tobacco-Free Future



Quitting tobacco is one of the most important steps you can take to improve your health.

You are not alone in your desire to stop smoking. Many resources and proven methods can help you in your journey to quit.

This guide describes:

- › Health benefits of quitting smoking
- › Health risks of vaping and other e-cigarettes
- › Steps to take on your journey to be smoke-free
- › Resources to help you quit

Health benefits of quitting smoking

- › Improves your overall health. This can help add as much as 10 years to your life.
- › Improves your lung function. Breathing and moving get easier.
- › Lowers your risk of some diseases and many types of cancer.
- › Lowers your risk of having chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), a disease that makes it hard to breathe. If you already have COPD, quitting smoking can slow the progress of the disease.
- › Helps you have a healthier pregnancy.

Health risks of vaping and other e-cigarettes

- › Vaping and e-cigarettes are not good substitutes if you stop smoking traditional cigarettes.
- › E-cigarettes expose you to harmful chemicals like formaldehyde and acrolein (a weed killer). These are proven to cause lung damage and increase cancer risk.
- › E-cigarettes have a lot of nicotine, which can cause damage to a teen or young adult's developing brain. It can lead to smoking traditional cigarettes as an adult.
- › Smoking and e-cigarettes increase your risk of illness such as the flu or a cold.

Steps to become smoke-free

- › Write down why you want to quit. Be specific. Think about how it will help you physically, mentally and financially.
- › **Identify triggers that make you want to smoke.** These can be people, places, things, moods or behaviors.
- › **Find a way to cope.** Try self-care activities like meditation, exercise, hobbies, journaling or getting enough sleep. Or, find other healthy coping options.
- › **Avoid high-risk situations.** Avoid your triggers, such as being around other people who are smoking or drinking alcohol or caffeine.
- › **Plan ahead for cravings.** Cravings usually last just 3 to 5 minutes. Create a “survival kit” with things to do besides smoke. Stock it with nicotine gum, hard candies, straws, toothpicks, a toothbrush and toothpaste, or other small objects to keep your hands and mouth busy.

- › **Identify support.** Tell friends and family about your plan to quit smoking. Let them know how they can support you.
- › **Ask your physician if taking a medication to stop smoking, also known as nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), is right for you.** Nicotine, the addictive drug in tobacco (including e-cigarettes) makes it hard to quit.

NRT may help if you have any of these nicotine withdrawal symptoms:

- Hunger
- Fatigue
- Irritation
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Insomnia
- Trouble concentrating

NRT medications can double your chance for success at quitting.

- › **Talk with your physician about lung cancer screening.** You may qualify for a lung cancer screening if you meet all of these criteria:
 - You are between the ages of 50 and 80.
 - You have at least a 20 “pack-year” history of smoking.
 - 1 pack-year is equal to smoking an average of 1 pack (or 20 cigarettes) every day for 1 year.
 - Example: If someone smokes 1 pack every day for 20 years or smokes 2 packs a day for 10 years, both equal 20 pack-years.

You need a physician's order for screening. If you do not have a primary care physician, call **844.344.6663 (TTY: 711)** to schedule a visit.

Resources to help you quit tobacco

Tobacco use is hard to stop. These resources can help you on your journey to become smoke- and tobacco-free.

Illinois Tobacco Quitline

Speak with a professional coach who will help you create your own plan to quit smoking. Your coach can also help you get medications to quit smoking.

Call **866.QUIT.YES (866.784.8937)** or go to quityes.org.

Nicotine Anonymous

Join an in-person or online support group to help you stay tobacco-free.

Go to nicotine-anonymous.org/find-a-meeting.

American Lung Association Freedom From Smoking® Lung Helpline

Certified counselors from the American Lung Association can help you decide if you are ready to quit. They can also help you pick the best options to quit.

Go to freedomfromsmoking.org/lung-helpline.

Smokefree.gov

This site has tools and tips to learn about ways to help you quit and how to use them. It includes smoke-free apps and social media sites.

Go to smokefree.gov.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Learn more about strategies for quitting and reasons to quit.

Go to cdc.gov/quit or call **1.800.QUITNOW (1.800.784.8669)**.

To get support over the phone through messaging support services, text **QUITNOW** to **333888**.

Northwestern Medicine Canning Thoracic Institute

We have world-class specialists in lung and chest care. We also have certified tobacco treatment specialists. They can offer personalized quit plans, counseling and medication management.

To schedule a virtual or in-person visit to quit smoking, please call **312.695.3800 (TTY: 711)**.

