

*Every year,
millions of
people break
the habit.*

A Tobacco-Free Future

Quitting tobacco is the most important step you can take to improve your health. This guide offers:

- Tips for quitting
- Strategies to stay tobacco-free
- Resources to help you quit

Tips for Quitting

Why is it so hard to quit? Nicotine is very addictive.

Nicotine withdrawal symptoms are unpleasant and can last for months. Some are:

- Hunger or fatigue
- Irritation, anger, anxiety, or depression
- Trouble sleeping or concentrating

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

When you quit, you will have more time, energy, money and freedom!

Health Benefits of Quitting

- 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 1 year, your risk of heart attack and stroke has dropped in half.
- Within 10 years, your risk of lung cancer has dropped in half.
- Within 15 years, your risk of heart disease is the same as someone who has never smoked.

Strategies to Stay Tobacco-Free

If you have not been using tobacco while in the hospital—congratulations! Once you've quit, it is important to stay tobacco-free. To stay tobacco-free after discharge:

- Let your friends and family know you quit. Support is key to your success.
- Remove smoking reminders. Get rid of your cigarettes, matches, ashtrays and lighters. Clean your home and car to remove the smell.
- Write down your reasons to quit. Your health, family and cost are great examples.

Be prepared, stay positive, and take it one day at a time.

- Identify your triggers. These could be stress, boredom, loneliness, sadness or celebration.
- Identify high-risk situations, such as being around other smokers or tobacco users, alcohol or caffeine use, after a meal or in the car.

How to deal with cravings:

- Plan ahead. Avoid trigger situations.
- Remember, cravings will come and go. They rarely last more than 3 minutes.
- Distract yourself—keep busy. Try taking a walk, deep breathing, a new hobby or exercise.
- Seek support from your friends and family.
- Use medications approved by your doctor to help you quit.
- Go to a smoke-free zone (movie theaters, restaurants, parks or museums).
- Stay focused, positive, and remind yourself why you quit.
- Promise yourself you will get through the day without using tobacco. Don't tell yourself you can have just one.

Resources to Help You Quit

Talking to a healthcare provider will at least double your chance of successfully quitting. Ask your healthcare provider about resources near you.

Other helpful resources include:

- Phone Support: The Illinois Tobacco Quitline offers free personal help by phone. Call 1.866.QUIT YES (1.866.784.8937).
- Useful websites:
 - www.smokefree.gov.
 - www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/.
 - <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/tobacco/smoking>.

Be proud of yourself. You deserve a tobacco-free future!

Para asistencia en español, por favor llamar al Departamento de Representantes para Pacientes al 312.926.3112.

The entities that come together as Northwestern Medicine are committed to representing the communities we serve, fostering a culture of inclusion, delivering culturally competent care, providing access to treatment and programs in a nondiscriminatory manner and eliminating healthcare disparities. For questions, please call either Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Patient Representatives Department at 312.926.3112, TDD/TTY 312.926.6363, the Northwestern Lake Forest Patient Relations manager at 847.535.8282 and/or the Northwestern Medical Group Patient Representatives Department at 312.695.1100, TDD/TTY 312.926.6363.

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