

*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 your lungs to get more oxygen and begin healing.
- Within weeks to months, your risk of heart attack begins to decrease and lung function begins to improve.
- Within 1 year, your risk of having a heart attack or 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.

### Strategies to stay tobacco-free

Once you have 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 cost are great examples.

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

- Identify your triggers. These could be objects such as coffee, your car or your computer, or emotions such as stress, boredom and loneliness.
- Identify high-risk situations, such as being around people who smoke or use tobacco, or drinking alcohol or caffeine.

#### **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 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.
- Promise yourself you will get through the day without using tobacco. Do not tell yourself you can have just one.

### **Resources to help you quit**

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

If you would like to discuss tobacco cessation, medications to help you quit and smoking-related lung diseases, you can schedule an appointment with a pulmonary medicine provider. Contact the Northwestern Medicine Pulmonary Medicine Tobacco Cessation Clinic at 312.695.1800.

To learn more about the resources available at Northwestern Medicine, visit [nm.org](http://nm.org) or call:

Northwestern Memorial Hospital  
312.926.8400, TTY 312.926.6363

Northwestern Medicine Lake Forest Hospital  
847.535.7647, TTY 312.926.6363

Northwestern Medicine Central DuPage Hospital and Northwestern Medicine Delnor Hospital  
630.933.4234, TTY 630.933.4833, [nm.org/westquitsmoking](http://nm.org/westquitsmoking)

Northwestern Medicine Huntley Hospital, Northwestern Medicine McHenry Hospital and Northwestern Medicine Woodstock Hospital  
815.788.2269, TTY 815.759.8020

Northwestern Medicine Kishwaukee Hospital and Northwestern Medicine Valley West Hospital

815.748.8962, TTY 815.756.6448, [nm.org/greaterdekalbcountyquitsmoking](https://www.nm.org/greaterdekalbcountyquitsmoking)

Other helpful resources include:

The Illinois Tobacco Quitline offers free personal help at [quityes.org](https://quityes.org) or by phone at 866.QUIT.YES.

Useful websites:

- [smokefree.gov](https://smokefree.gov)
- [cdc.gov/tobacco/quit\\_smoking](https://cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking)
- [resphealth.org/healthy-lungs/quit-smoking](https://resphealth.org/healthy-lungs/quit-smoking)
- [cancer.gov/cancertopics/tobacco/smoking](https://cancer.gov/cancertopics/tobacco/smoking)

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