



Quit Smoking

Quitting smoking is one of the most important things you can do to reduce your cancer risk. Tobacco contains more than 7000 chemicals, including over 70 chemicals known to cause cancer.

When you smoke, chemicals enter your lungs and spread through your body. However, there are immediate benefits as soon as you put out your last cigarette, even if you already have health problems.

Reasons to quit

- Twelve hours after stopping, almost all nicotine is out of your system. Most by-products are gone within five days.
- After 24 hours, the level of carbon monoxide in your blood has dropped dramatically, meaning your body can take and use oxygen more efficiently.
- After two days, your taste and smell start to return.
- After two months, bloodflow to your hands and feet improves.
- After one year, there is a rapid decline in your risk of heart disease.
- After 10 years, your risk of lung cancer is halved.

Quitting

Nicotine is highly addictive. Although various products can assist a person to quit smoking, there is no easy fix. Many smokers need to attempt quitting several times before they give up for good.

Choose a safe and effective quitting approach that suits you, and keep trying. Practice helps smokers plan what to do the next time they get an urge to smoke.

Approaches to quitting

Cold turkey

This means stopping completely without cutting down. For many people, this is a successful approach.

Nicotine replacement therapy

Nicotine gum, patches, lozenges, tablets or inhalers may be useful for some people, such as heavy smokers. Your doctor or pharmacist can explain these products.

Prescription drugs

Prescription medications, such as Bupropion, can help to reduce withdrawal symptoms when you quit, such as cravings, irritability and anxiety.

Alternative therapies

While there is often interest in herbal remedies, spiritual healing or other alternative therapies, there is insufficient evidence on their effectiveness.

Be wary of methods or products that promise success without you having to do anything, or that make exaggerated claims of success rates.

Coping with cravings and symptoms

The first few days of quitting can be the hardest. You may feel tired, irritable and tense. After about one to two weeks most of these symptoms will disappear. Few people quit without experiencing cravings.

If you are craving a cigarette, the four Ds can assist:

- **Delay acting** on the urge to smoke. After five minutes, the urge to smoke weakens.
- **Deep breathing** slowly and deeply, three times.
- **Drink water**, sipping and swallowing slowly.
- **Do something else** to take the focus off smoking. Listen to music, exercise or talk to a friend.

After quitting, being more active is the best thing you can do for general health and wellbeing. If you have any concerns or questions, please contact your doctor.

Where can I get reliable information?

- **National Quitline: 13 78 48 (13 QUIT) or www.quitnow.gov.au**
- **Cancer Council NSW 13 11 20. Information and support for you and your family for the cost of a local call anywhere in Australia. www.cancer council.com.au**
- **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) 13 14 50**