



SMOKING TOBACCO AND QUITTING

Smoking tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. Smoking tobacco products include cigarettes, cigars, cigarillos, little cigars, blunts, bidis, and kreteks. When these products are burned, the smoker inhales nicotine (which is both an addictive sedative and a stimulant), tar, and other cancer-causing chemicals.

Cigarette smoking causes more than 480,000 deaths each year in the U.S. (nearly one in five deaths), according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC reports that nine out of 10 lung cancer deaths and eight out of 10 deaths from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are caused by smoking.¹

Health effects of smoking tobacco

In addition to causing many types of cancer, smoking tobacco significantly increases the risk of coronary heart disease that can cause heart attack, heart failure, chest pain, and arrhythmia. Smokers also have a greater risk of stroke, which can cause paralysis, muscle weakness, trouble speaking, memory loss, or death, the CDC says. Smoking can raise triglycerides and lower “good” (HDL) cholesterol, make blood more likely to clot, increase plaque, and thicken and narrow blood vessels and damage the cells that line them.¹ Smoking also increases the risk of severe illness from Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

According to the CDC, women who smoke are at increased risk for preterm delivery, stillbirth, low birth weight, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), ectopic pregnancy, and orofacial clefts in infants. Reduced fertility, birth defects, and miscarriage are associated with men who smoke. For men and women, smoking causes general inflammation within the body and decreased immune function.¹

Dangerous oral and dental side effects can result from smoking tobacco:

- Cancer of the lip, mouth, throat, and esophagus
- Periodontal disease (gum disease), which can cause tooth loss¹
- Stained teeth and tongue
- Dulled sense of taste and smell
- Slow healing after a tooth extraction or other surgery
- Difficulties in correcting cosmetic dental problems

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More than 20 million Americans have died because of smoking since the first Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Health was issued in 1964, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Most of those deaths were of adults who smoked, but 2.5 million were of nonsmokers who died because they breathed secondhand smoke: air polluted by other people's cigarette smoke.² Secondhand smoke causes stroke, lung cancer, and coronary heart disease in adults, according to the CDC. Children exposed to secondhand smoke have a higher risk for SIDS, acute respiratory infections, middle ear disease, more severe asthma, respiratory symptoms, and slowed lung growth.¹

Quitting smoking

Quitting is the only way to decrease your risk of these and other tobacco-related health problems.¹ Those who quit smoking immediately begin to improve their health and longevity, according to these CDC facts¹:

- The risk for a heart attack drops one year after quitting smoking.
- The risk for stroke falls to about that of a nonsmoker within two to five years after quitting.
- The risks for cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus, and bladder drop by half within five years of quitting.
- The risk of dying from lung cancer drops by half 10 years after quitting.

Nicotine's addictive nature can make quitting especially difficult. That is why it is important to have a plan and a support network. Begin by writing down your reasons for quitting. Exercising, chewing gum, and keeping occupied can help you quit. Talk to your dentist or doctor to see if any medications can help you quit.

Quitting smokeless tobacco

Smokeless tobacco comes in many forms, including chew tobacco, vape, and snuff. In an effort to quit smoking tobacco, people sometimes choose a smokeless form of tobacco to consume. However, consuming forms of smokeless tobacco increases your chance of developing the same cancers and diseases as smoking.

The best way to protect your health is to quit all forms of tobacco. Set a goal for quitting and incorporate new hobbies into your life to keep busy. Remove all smokeless tobacco products from your home and schedule appointments with your doctor and dentist to prioritize your health and stay focused on quitting⁴.

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For more information

Delaware residents adults age 13 and older who want to quit smoking should call or visit the Delaware Quitline at 1-866-409-1858 and <https://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dph/dpc/quitline.html>.

Visit The American Lung Association at www.govserv.org/US/Newark/204313584563/American-Lung-Association-in-Del

Visit The American Cancer Society at <https://www.cancer.org/healthy/stay-away-from-tobacco/guide-quitting-smoking.html>.

Contact the Division of Public Health (DPH), Bureau of Oral Health and Dental Services, at 302-622-4540 and www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/hsm/ohphome.html.

For more information about the dangers of tobacco and secondhand smoke and data, visit DPH's Tobacco Prevention and Control Program at <https://dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/dpc/tobacco.html>.

Read the U.S. Surgeon General's 2020 report, *Smoking Cessation* at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK555591/>

Resources

1. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved August 11, 2020 from: <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/>
2. American Dental Association. 2020. *Smoking and Tobacco*. In Mouth Healthy. Retrieved July 16, 2020 from: <http://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/s/smoking-and-tobacco>
3. American Dental Association. 2020. *Smoking 5 Steps to Quit*. In Mouth Healthy. Retrieved July 16, 2020 from: <https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/az-topics/s/smoking-5-steps-to-quit>
4. Delta Dental. 2021. *Quitting Chew Tobacco*. Retrieved July 28, 2021 from: <https://www.deltadental.com/us/en/protect-my-smile/overall-health/smokeless-tobacco.html#:~:text=Tips%20to%20help%20you%20quit%20chew%201%20Make,busy%20and%20active.%20...%205%20Chew%20substitutes.%20>

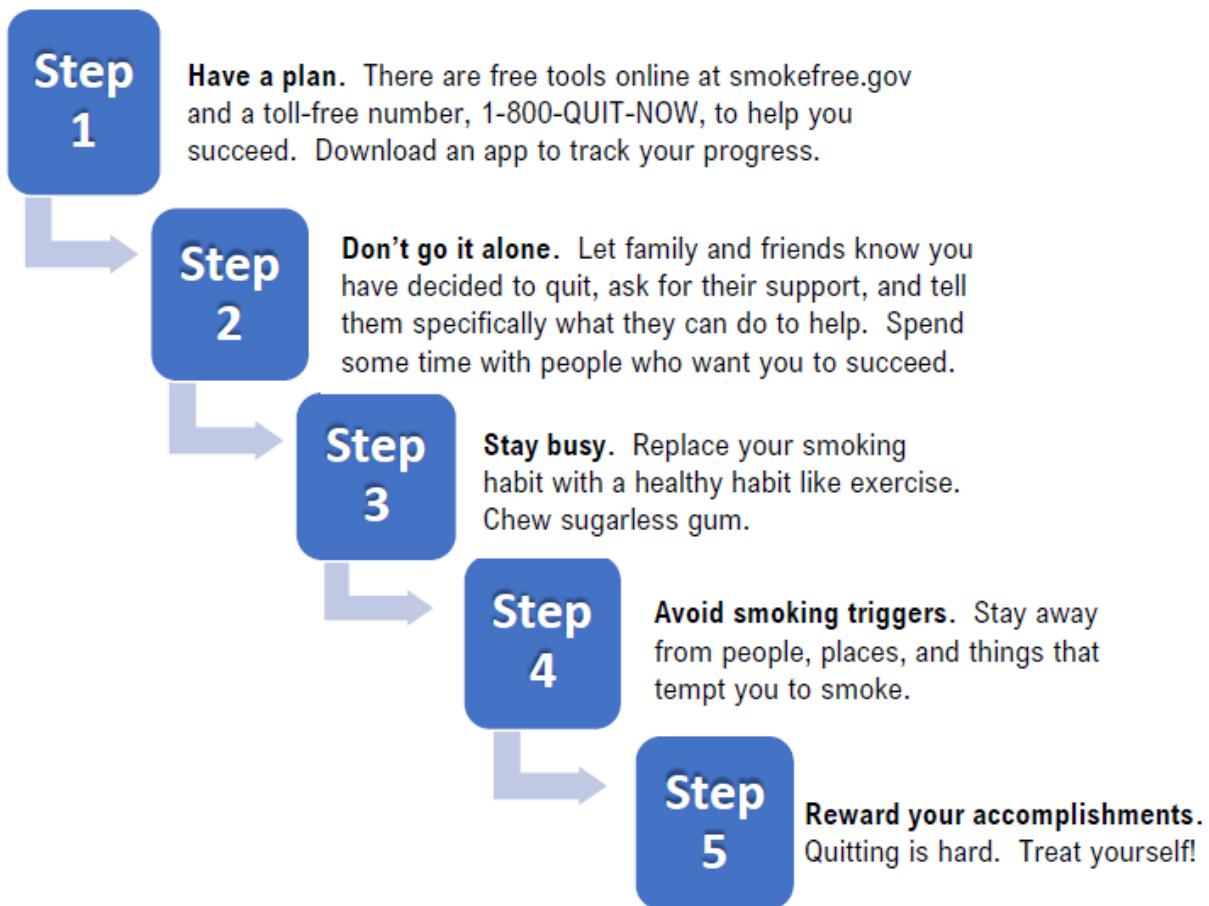
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5 Steps to Quit Smoking



Adapted from the American Heart Association