

Exit Strategy

A Step-by-Step Guide to Quitting

Before You Quit:

Choose a "quit date." Choosing an official quit date will help you psych yourself up. Choose a date that's not too far off (a few weeks or a month), and let your friends and family know it's coming.

Decide how you'll quit. Will you quit "cold turkey" or cut down slowly? Will you get help from your family doctor? Will you use a cessation aid, like a patch or nicotine gum? Whatever you choose, it helps to have a plan.

After You Quit:

Avoid "triggers." Most tobacco users have certain places, people, or events that trigger a stronger desire to use tobacco. Make it a point to avoid tempting situations.

Change your routine. If you typically chain-smoke on the way to work in the morning, try taking the bus or carpooling with a non-smoking co-worker. If you enjoy a pinch of dip after dinner, try chewing gum instead.

For the Long Haul:

Be patient. Quitting is a long process, and you'll probably battle cravings for months after you smoke your last cigarette. If you backslide in a moment of weakness, don't use that as an excuse to go back to tobacco. Start fresh the next day and get back on the wagon.

Get support when you need it. It's a good idea to have a few close friends or family members to call when you have a bad day. You can also find free resources online or by phone, such as **1-800-QUIT-NOW** or at www.smokefree.gov.



Countdown to Quitting

Ready to kick the habit? Use this form below to help make a plan.

List three reasons you want to quit:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

List three people you can call for support:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What are your "triggers?" _____

List three things you can do instead of using tobacco:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Now, write down your quit date: _____



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QUITTING TOBACCO



Within Reach

Quitting Time

From "Someday" to "Now"

According to a recent report by the American Cancer Society and the World Lung Foundation, nearly 6 million people die every year from tobacco-related illnesses. A third of those people die of some type of cancer, but others die from things like heart disease or stroke. Of course, you know that tobacco is bad for you and you know you should quit. You'll quit when you're ready, you tell yourself. Here's the thing, though: the 6 million people who die every year were aware of the risks of smoking, too. They probably planned to quit someday. For them, though, "someday" never came.

What are You Smoking?

The Ugly Truth About Tobacco

All tobacco products contain nicotine, and when it's used, nicotine floods your bloodstream and heads to your brain. Your brain reacts to the drug by releasing large amounts of dopamine, the chemical that it usually releases when you're doing something enjoyable. Tobacco users get hooked on that dopamine dump – and eventually they need nicotine just to feel normal.

Nicotine isn't the only nasty chemical in tobacco, though. Tobacco smoke contains more than 7,000 different chemicals, including:

- Ammonia, a chemical found in many cleaning products
- Arsenic, which is commonly used as rat poison
- Butane, the main ingredient in lighter fluid
- Formaldehyde, a type of embalming fluid
- Several toxic metals, including nickel, cadmium and beryllium

Smokeless tobacco products contain many of the same chemicals found in cigars and cigarettes. Additionally, smokeless tobacco products contain nitrosamines. Nitrosamines are cancer-causing chemicals formed during the growing and production of smokeless tobacco. The bottom line is that all forms of tobacco are hazardous to your health.

Too Little, Too Late

Katie's Story

Katie was only 40 when she was diagnosed with lung cancer. The Utah mother of three had been a smoker since high school, and although she'd tried to quit dozens of times, she'd always started up again after a few weeks. She promised her husband and her kids that she'd quit for good . . . when she was ready.

One day, Katie developed a cough that wouldn't go away. Katie learned that she had lung cancer, most likely caused by years of smoking. After her diagnosis, Katie quit – cold turkey. Unfortunately, though, the damage had been done: After a year of aggressive chemotherapy, Katie lost her battle with cancer. If she'd quit smoking a few years earlier, she may have lived a much longer life.

Tobacco and Your Body

The Short-Term Effects

Everyone knows that the long-term effects of smoking include heart disease, lung disease and several types of cancer – but tobacco products can be harmful in the short term, too.

A few seconds after you smoke a cigarette:

- Your heart rate and blood pressure increase
 - Carbon monoxide starves your organs of oxygen
 - Nicotine floods your brain, causing it to release dopamine
- A few minutes after you smoke a cigarette:
- Your dopamine levels drop, making your body crave more nicotine
 - Your body's immune system reacts to the presence of chemicals

That dopamine rush is what gets most tobacco users hooked. Over time, your body begins to crave the adrenaline rush that comes with nicotine. As tobacco use increases, so do the short-term side effects. For example:

- A yellowish-brown film builds up on your teeth
- Your lungs become clogged with tar
- Your immune system gets weaker
- Your breath, clothes and hair smell bad
- You have trouble catching your breath

Smokeless tobacco users are at risk for many of the same health problems as smokers. Dip, snuff and snus also contain nicotine and some of the same cancer-causing chemicals.

What About Weight Gain?

Although not everyone who quits smoking gains weight, it's not unusual for quitters to gain around five pounds. If you're worried about weight gain, try adding exercise to your daily routine – take a brisk walk around the block, swim, or go for a jog.

Some people find that they have an increased appetite or that they use food as a replacement for cigarettes – this can also lead to weight gain. Before you quit, make sure your kitchen is stocked with healthy snacks, like carrot sticks or celery.

A Wake-Up Call

Josh's Story

Josh started using smokeless tobacco when he played high school football in Texas. Everyone else on the team dipped – even the coach. Josh figured that since he wasn't inhaling chemicals into his lungs, he wasn't taking a big risk. A year after Josh graduated college, he went to the dentist for a routine cleaning. The dentist said there were a few pre-cancerous spots on Josh's teeth and gums. He told Josh that if he wanted to save his teeth – and possibly his life – he needed to stop using smokeless tobacco.

Josh quit dipping right away. It wasn't easy. He struggled with withdrawal symptoms for a few weeks – but it was worth it. Josh's teeth and gums got healthier and the spots went away. That scary visit to the dentist was the wake-up call Josh needed to get his health on track.

The Benefits of Being a Quitter

Cessation and Your Body

The health benefits of quitting start to kick in right away:

After 20 minutes:

- Your blood pressure and heart rate drop
- Your circulation improves

After two days:

- The oxygen levels in your blood go up
- The carbon monoxide levels in your blood go down
- Your risk of a heart attack starts to decline
- Your damaged nerve endings start to repair themselves
- You start to regain your senses of taste and smell

After two weeks:

- Your lung function and circulation improve

After nine months:

- Your energy increases
- Your respiratory health improves – less coughing and shortness of breath

After one year:

- Your risk of developing tobacco-related heart disease is cut in half

The best part is, the longer you remain tobacco-free, the greater the health benefits. After 10 years of being a nonsmoker, your risk of developing tobacco-related cancers drops dramatically and your risk of stroke goes down, too.

Still Need Another Reason?

Another benefit of quitting? The savings. Tobacco products aren't cheap – depending on where you live and how much you use, you could be spending anywhere from \$10 to \$20 a day on tobacco.

Want to know how much you can save? Use this quick and easy form to add it up:

Packs per day: _____

Cost per pack: x _____

Total: = \$ _____

Now, multiply that total by 365: \$ _____

That's how much money you'd save in a year if you cut tobacco out of your budget. If you need motivation to quit, think of what you could do with that extra chunk of cash.

