Smoking Cessation Program

Rewards of Quitting

When a strong craving hits, it can be easy to lose sight of the benefits of quitting. You might lose your focus, but there is no good reason to smoke. Remind yourself of the rewards of quitting to stay on track.

Instant Rewards of Quitting

When you smoke, the chemicals in tobacco reach your lungs quickly every time you inhale. Your blood then carries the toxins to every organ in your body. There is no safe amount of cigarette smoke. After you quit, your body begins to heal within 20 minutes of your last cigarette, and the nicotine leaves your body within three days. As your body starts to repair itself, you may feel worse instead of better. Withdrawal can be difficult, but this is a sign that your body is healing.

Long-term Rewards of Quitting

Tobacco use in the United States causes about 443,000 deaths each year, or nearly one in every five deaths. Quitting can help you add years to your life. Smokers die on average 13 years earlier than non-smokers. Take control of your health by quitting (and staying quit). Over time, you will greatly lower your risk of death from lung cancer and other diseases, such as:

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Chronic bronchitis
- Emphysema
- At least 13 other kinds of cancer

You will also cut back on dangerous secondhand smoke for your loved ones. In the United States, about 49,000 deaths are caused by exposure to secondhand smoke—protect your family and set a good example. By quitting, you’re showing your family and other young people that a life without cigarettes is not only healthy, but possible.

Health Milestones After You Quit

- Within 20 minutes, your heart rate and blood pressure drop
- Within 12 hours, the carbon monoxide level in your bloodstream drops to normal
- Within 3 months, your circulation and lung function improves
- After 9 months, you will cough less and breathe easier
- After 1 year, your risk of coronary heart disease is cut in half
- After 5 years, your risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, and bladder are cut in half
- After 10 years, you are one-half as likely to die from lung cancer, and your risk of larynx or pancreatic cancer decreases
- After 15 years, your risk of coronary heart disease is the same as a non-smoker’s risk

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### Why Quitting is Hard

Many ex-smokers say quitting was the hardest thing they ever did. However, millions of people have been able to do it and you can too. An important first step of the quit process is learning why you feel like you need to smoke. When you understand why you smoke, you can prepare yourself to find the best ways to quit.

**Withdrawal**

One of the main reasons smokers keep smoking is nicotine. Nicotine is a chemical in cigarettes that makes you addicted to smoking. Over time your body gets used to having nicotine. However, the more you smoke, the more nicotine you need to feel normal. When your body doesn't get nicotine, you may feel uncomfortable and crave cigarettes. This is called withdrawal.

It takes time to get over withdrawal. Most physical symptoms go away after a few days to a week, but cigarette cravings may stick around longer. So don't give up. You can do this. Visit our withdrawal page to get tips on handling symptoms of withdrawal.

**Triggers**

When you smoke, it becomes an important part of your life. Certain activities, feelings, and people are linked to your smoking. When you come across these things, they may "trigger" or turn on your urge to smoke. Try to anticipate these smoking triggers and develop ways to deal with them. Here are a few tips:

- Go to places that don’t allow smoking. Shops, movie theatres, and many restaurants are now smokefree.
- Spend more time with non-smokers. You won’t want to smoke as badly if you are around people who don’t smoke.
- Keep your hands busy. Play a game on your phone, eat a healthy snack, or squeeze a stress ball.
- Take a deep breath. Remind yourself of the reasons why you want to stop smoking. Think of people in your life who will be happier and healthier because you decided to quit.

For a more detailed description of triggers and tips on handling them, visit our cravings page.

### Consider Using a Quit Smoking Program

Quit smoking programs help smokers spot and cope with problems they have when trying to quit. The programs teach problem-solving and other coping skills. A quit-smoking program can help you quit for good by:

- Helping you understand why you smoke
- Teaching you how to handle withdrawal and stress
- Teaching you tips to help resist the urge to smoke

Visit your county or state government's website to see if they offer quit smoking programs in your area. If you want to talk to a quit smoking counselor right away, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW. You can also get on the go quit support through your mobile phone with the SmokefreeTXT text messaging program.
# Smoking Cessation Program

## Steps to Prepare

We get it, quitting is hard. But it is easier if you prepare ahead of time. When you feel like you are ready to quit, START by following these five steps:

### 1. Set a Quit Date

Pick a date within the next two weeks to quit smoking. This will give you enough time to prepare. Really think about your quit date. Avoid choosing a day where you know you will be busy, stressed, or tempted to smoke (for example, a night out with friends, days where you may smoke at work).

### 2. Tell Family and Friends You Plan to Quit

Quitting smoking is easier when the people in your life support you. Let them know you are planning to quit. Explain how they can help you quit. We all need different things, so be sure you let friends and family know exactly how they can help. Not sure what you need? Here are a few ways to START the conversation:

- Tell family and friends your reasons for quitting.
- Ask your friends and family to check in with you to see how things are going.
- Identify your smoking triggers, and ask your friends and family to help you deal with them.
- Ask your friends and family to help you think of smokefree activities you can do together (like going to the movies or a nice restaurant).
- Know a friend or family member who smokes? Ask them to quit with you, or at least not smoke around you.
- You are going to be tempted to smoke. Ask your friends and family to let you have a cigarette—no matter what.
- Let your friends and family know that you may be in a bad mood while quitting; ask them to be patient and help you through it.
- Do you take any medicines? Tell your doctor or pharmacist you are quitting. You may need to change your prescriptions after you quit.

Support is one of the keys to successfully quitting. Check out additional support options to help you quit.

### 3. Anticipate and Plan for Challenges While Quitting

Quitting smoking is hardest during the first few weeks. You will deal with uncomfortable feelings, temptations to smoke, withdrawal symptoms, and cigarette cravings. An important part of preparing to quit is anticipating these challenges. To get a head START, be aware of the following:

#### Uncomfortable Feelings

The first few weeks after quitting, a lot of people may feel uncomfortable and will crave a cigarette. This is because of withdrawal. Withdrawal is when your body gets used to not having nicotine from cigarettes. Nicotine is the chemical found in cigarettes that makes you want to keep smoking. Some of the more common feelings that come with
Smoking Cessation Program

withdrawal are:

- Feeling a little depressed
- Not being able to sleep
- Getting cranky, frustrated, or mad
- Feeling anxious, nervous, or restless
- Having trouble thinking clearly

You may be tempted to smoke to relieve these feelings. Just remember that they are temporary, no matter how powerful they feel at the time.

**Smoking Triggers**

Triggers are specific persons, places, or activities that make you feel like smoking. It is important to know your smoking triggers so you can learn to deal with them.

**Cravings**

Cravings are short but intense urges to smoke. They usually only last a few minutes. Plan ahead and come up with a list of short activities you can do when you get a craving.

**4. Remove Cigarettes and Other Tobacco From Your Home, Car, and Work**

You will be tempted to smoke during your quit. Stay strong; you can do it! Removing things that remind you of smoking will get you ready to quit. Try these tips:

- Throw away all your cigarettes and matches. Give or throw away your lighters and ashtrays. Remember the ashtray and lighter in your car!
- Don’t save one pack of cigarettes “just in case.’ Keeping one pack just makes it easier to start smoking again.
- Remove the smell of cigarettes from your life. Make things clean and fresh at work, in your car, and at home. Clean your drapes and clothes. Shampoo your car. You will be less tempted to light up if you don’t smell smoke.
- Have your dentist clean your teeth to get rid of smoking stains. Your teeth will look amazing. When you quit smoking, they will always look that way.

**Don’t Use Other Products with Tobacco**

Thinking about using other tobacco products instead of cigarettes? Think again. All tobacco products contain harmful chemicals and poisons. Despite their name, light or low-tar cigarettes are just as bad as regular cigarettes. Smokeless tobacco, pipes, cigars, cigarillos, hookahs (waterpipes), bidi cigarettes, clove cigarettes, and herbal cigarettes also hurt your health.

No matter how they are presented in advertisements, all tobacco products are dangerous.
**Smoking Cessation Medication Brief Instructions and FAQs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Nicotine Patch</th>
<th>Nicotine Gum</th>
<th>Nicotine Lozenge</th>
<th>Nicotine Nasal Spray</th>
<th>Nicotine Inhaler</th>
<th>Bupropion SR (Zyban®, Wellbutrin®)</th>
<th>Varenicline (Chantix®)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brief Instructions</strong></td>
<td>Apply 1 patch to clean, dry, hairless skin like upper arm, upper back, shoulders, lower back or hip. Avoid moisturizers under patch and wash hands after use. Replace daily after waking and rotate site daily.</td>
<td>Chew until a peppery taste and slight tingle occurs, then park between cheek and gum. Repeat when taste fades, then park in another area of mouth. Avoid eating and drinking for 15 mins before and after use.</td>
<td>Allow lozenge to dissolve slowly without chewing or swallowing. Avoid eating and drinking for 15 mins before and after use.</td>
<td>Blow nose if not clear and tilt head back. Insert bottle tip as far in nostril as comfortable, angling toward wall of nostril. Do not sniff while spraying. Wait 2–3 mins before blowing nose.</td>
<td>Inhale using short breaths or puffs to get vapor in mouth and throat but not lungs. Store cartridges at temperature range 60°F–77°F for maximum effectiveness.</td>
<td>Take with food. Take 1 pill x 3 days then 2 pills starting day 4. Take second pill at least 8 hours after the first yet as early as possible to avoid insomnia.</td>
<td>Take with food and water as directed. Do not make up a missed dose by doubling up the next dose. Avoid using NRT with varenicline.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Questions You May Receive from Your Patients and Examples of Responses**

**What should I do if the patch does not stick?**
Place the patch on non-hairy skin with the heel of your hand and press for 10 seconds. Do not use moisturizing soap or lotion before applying the patch. You can use medical tape to help the patch stick better.

**Can I become addicted to the patch?**
Nicotine from the patch is delivered in a much steadier and lower quantity than nicotine from cigarettes, so the chance of becoming addicted is much lower.

**If I have had major dental work done or wear dentures, should I use the gum or lozenge?**
You should use the lozenge. The gum should generally be avoided if you have had major dental work and/or have dentures, braces or temporary crowns.

**Can I use the patch and gum (or lozenge) at the same time?**
Yes. Using the patch and gum (or lozenge) together helps many smokers quit. The patch provides a stable dose of nicotine throughout the day, while the gum or lozenge is short-acting and may help with withdrawal symptoms.

**Can I use the patch, gum or lozenge after a brief relapse?**
Yes, continued use of these medications after relapse is safe and can increase your chance of quitting.

**How do I know if I’m getting too much or too little nicotine?**
If you’re getting too much nicotine, you may have a fast heartbeat, headache, upset stomach, and/or feel dizzy or nauseous. If you have these symptoms, stop using the patch right away and call your doctor.

If you’re getting too little nicotine, you may feel anxious, irritable, have difficulty concentrating, feel strong cravings, experience insomnia and/or have an increased appetite. For more help, call your doctor or visit a quit-smoking program.

**Do you have any medication that does not have nicotine?**
Yes, bupropion and varenicline are two non-nicotine prescription medications that have been shown to be very effective in helping people like you quit. Bupropion is more effective when used in combination with nicotine replacement therapy.

**I need more help to stop. How can I get it?**
Talk to your doctor, call 311 for a referral to a list of quit-smoking programs or the NYS Smokers’ Quitline at 1-866-NY-QUITS for additional counseling and medications. NYC Quits, an online resource is also available for smokers and recent quitters (visit nyc.gov; search: NYC QUITS).

For more provider and patient resources visit nyc.gov and search TOBACCO CLINICIANS

Brief instructions adapted with permission from Tobacco Treatment Medication Dosing Chart created by the Center For Tobacco Independence (tobaccoindependence.org)

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