



Quitting smoking is one of the most important things you can do to reduce your risk of cancer. Tobacco smoke contains more than 4000 chemicals, including over 60 carcinogens (chemicals known to cause cancer).

There are immediate health benefits as soon as you quit smoking, even if you already suffer health problems.

Reasons to quit

- Twelve hours after stopping, almost all nicotine is out of your system with most by-products 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 senses of taste and smell start to return.
- After two months, blood flow to your hands and feet improves.
- After one year, your risk of heart disease rapidly drops.
- After 10 years, your risk of lung cancer is halved.

Quitting

Many smokers need to practise quitting several times before they give up for good. Keep trying. Practice helps you plan what to do the next time you get an urge to smoke.

Approaches to quitting:

> Cold turkey

For many people the most successful way to quit is going “cold turkey”. This means stopping completely without cutting down.

> Nicotine replacement therapy

Using nicotine gum, patches, lozenges, tablets or inhalers may be useful for heavy smokers, though most smokers quit by themselves. Your doctor or pharmacist will explain how to use these products.

> Prescription drugs to help

Prescription medications can help to reduce withdrawal symptoms when you quit, such as cravings, irritability, and anxiety. But it may not stop them completely.

> Alternative therapies

Some people try herbal remedies, spiritual healing or other alternative therapies, but there is insufficient evidence these methods help you quit.

Recommendations

- Choose a method that is safe, effective and suits you.
- Be wary of methods or products that promise success without you having to do anything or that make exaggerated claims of success rates.
- Nicotine is highly addictive. While various products can help smokers quit, there is no easy fix.

Coping with recovery symptoms

The first few days of quitting can be the hardest, as you may feel tired, irritable and tense. After about one to two weeks most of these symptoms will disappear.

To cope with cravings try the four Ds:

Delay acting on the urge to smoke. After five minutes, the urge to smoke weakens.

Deep breathe in and out slowly and deeply, and repeat three times.

Drink water, sipping slowly, holding it in the mouth a little longer to savour the taste.

Do something else. Listen to music, exercise or talk to a friend. After quitting smoking, being more active is the best thing you can do for your 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)

Quit because you can website:

www.quitbecauseyoucan.org.au

Cancer Council Australia website

www.cancer.org.au