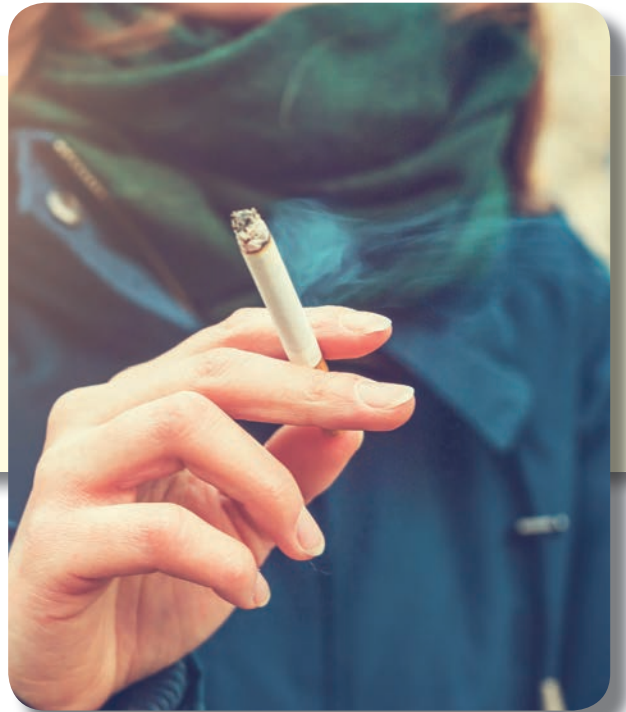


**Good Health Matters**  
Quitting Smoking and **YOU**

# Smoking Facts and How to Quit **SMOKING**



**NorthCare Network**

# Quitting Smoking

**SMOKING is NOT good** for your **health**. *In fact, smoking is an addiction, and it “is the single leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States.”*<sup>1</sup> In this brochure, you will learn **about quitting smoking, also called smoking cessation**.



**Quitting Smoking: You Can Do It!** According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention’s fact sheets, there are **more former smokers** than current smokers. Research suggests nicotine is highly addictive, like other dangerous drugs. However, many people quit smoking, despite the challenges.

***While it may be one of the hardest things you do, it could be one of the most rewarding.*** Once you quit, you will have immediate health benefits. Within 20 minutes your heart rate and blood pressure drop, while in 12 hours your carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal. After a month, quitting smoking breaks the cycle of addiction by rewiring your brain.

**Nicotine withdrawal is difficult. It takes a lot of strength and will power to quit.**

The worst withdrawal symptoms will be within the **first few days to several weeks**. Try to fight **cravings** with other activities. These strong urges usually pass within minutes.



**It's Your  
Choice.**

## Nicotine withdrawal symptoms include:

- *Feeling more cranky, irritable, or angry*
- *Difficulty sleeping or thinking clearly*
- *Cravings, or intense urges, to smoke that can feel overwhelming*
- *Eating more which may lead to weight gain*

**QUITTING SMOKING** helps improve or prevent such conditions as **high blood pressure, heart diseases, lung cancer, and smoke-related diseases**.



# Quitting Smoking–How to Do It

**Start the Process.** You will need to create a plan that can help you achieve your goal.

- Remember, you first need to decide **WHY** you want to quit. Without good reasons, it will be that much harder to do.
- **Create a plan.** This includes **picking a date** to stop smoking and **telling others** you are planning to quit.
- **Avoid stress.** Know your **triggers**—what activities or thoughts make you want to smoke. Plan a response to these triggers, like chewing gum instead of smoking a cigarette.
- **Avoid smoke-filled places.** Change your routine and habits to include smoke-free activities.
- In order to **keep your hands busy**, you might use a squeeze ball and build muscle tone.
- Discuss quitting with your **doctor or mental health worker** to help decide if you might need **nicotine replacement therapy (NRT)** like gum, patches, or lozenges to reduce withdrawal symptoms.
- Consider **support groups** or **help lines**. Decide what assistance will work best for you.

## Let Others Help You

To succeed, you will probably need *a little help from family and friends*. Make sure they know what you are doing and that you need their support. The following tips can help everyone when the going gets tough:

- *Tell your family and friends your reasons for quitting so they can remind you why. Let them know what you want or don't want from them.*
- *Ask them to keep track of you, particularly during the first difficult weeks of quitting.*
- *Tell people not to give you a cigarette, no matter what you say.*
- *Ask those who smoke not to do it around you.*
- *Let people know that you may be in a bad mood during initial withdrawal. Ask them to be patient with you.*
- *Remember to thank those who help you. Being mindful of others can help reduce stress for everyone.*



**It is never too late to quit smoking.** The benefits are greater for people who manage to stop at an earlier age, but there are health benefits no matter what age you quit.

**REMEMBER, NEVER GIVE UP!**