

# Smoking and Your Heart



CARDIOVASCULAR  
RESOURCES  
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Smoking is an unhealthy habit. Smoking raises your risk for cancer, lung disease, and heart disease—in fact, smoking can kill you. When you smoke, you also harm the health of the people around you. People who smoke may become addicted to the nicotine in cigarettes—an addiction that is hard, but not impossible, to beat. If you smoke, you need to quit now!

When you stop smoking, you will enjoy better health and many other benefits. For example, you will significantly cut your risk of cancer, lung disease, and heart disease. You will also have fewer coughs and colds. In addition, you will create a healthier environment for your family and the other people around you—they will no longer be forced to breathe your “secondhand smoke.” You will have more money to spend on things you want. And your breath, hair, and clothes will smell better.

Although it may seem hard, you **can** stop smoking! Millions of people have done it. Try these tips:

- Make a list of the reasons you want to quit. Read them each day to remind yourself of the many benefits you will enjoy once you quit.
- Pick a date to quit and stick to it.
- Ask your family and friends to support you in your fight to quit smoking. Receiving praise from others can be very motivating!
- Stay away from other people who smoke. For example, you might only go to restaurants that do not allow their patrons to smoke.

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- Find something else to do when you want to smoke. Use this opportunity to get involved in activities that you enjoy. You might learn to do craft projects (such as knitting or model building) that keep your hands busy, or take up activities like reading and doing crossword puzzles that keep your mind off smoking.
- Reward yourself for quitting. For example, each day, put the money you would have spent on cigarettes into a jar. Then, at the end of every month, spend that money on a new outfit or a fancy meal in a restaurant.
- Punishing yourself for lapses in your resolve is not productive. If you do have one cigarette, forget it and start over.
- Be prepared for your nicotine cravings: plan what you will do the next time you crave a cigarette.
- Don't think about the long road ahead. Just try to avoid smoking one day at a time.
- Be proud of yourself!

**It takes time, but you can quit!**

**NOTES:**