



You Can Quit Smoking

If you smoke, think about these facts...

- More than a million people successfully quit smoking every year in the U.S.
- Many people try a number of times before they stop for good. Even if you have tried quitting before, keep trying.
- Most people who try to stop smoking will succeed in the end.

Quitting helps you right away—and in the future

- After 24 hours:** The chance of heart attack goes down.
- After 1 to 9 months:** Circulation, smell, and taste improve. Your lungs work better. You have more energy and fewer colds.
- After 1 year:** Your risk of heart disease is cut in half.
- After 5 years:** Your risk of stroke drops significantly.
- After 10 years:** The risk of lung cancer drops to half.

Choosing your next steps

On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 is "I am not ready" and 10 is "I am definitely ready"), where are you?



If you're not ready

(1 to 3 on the scale):

- Make a list: the things you like about smoking on one side and the reasons you might be ready to quit on the other.
- Think about changing some things you'd need to change to be more ready to quit.
- Seek out friends who've quit. Ask them to describe how they did it.
- Wait one minute before lighting up when you feel the urge to smoke. Think of other ways you might respond to it.

If you have mixed feelings

(4 to 6 on the scale):

- Reflect on your reasons for continuing to smoke. Do they outweigh your reasons for wanting to quit?
- Take small steps to make tobacco a less automatic part of your life. For example, buy a kind of cigarette you like less.
- Choose regular times during your day and night to practice being tobacco-free.
- Try a healthy new activity that's incompatible with smoking, such as swimming, running, or joining a singing group.
- Keep a "pack track" log for a day or two. Record the times you smoke;

how you feel before, during, and after; who you're with; and how much you needed the cigarette. Understand the role smoking plays in your daily life and think about other ways you could meet those needs.

If you're ready

(7 to 10 on the scale):

- What are the main reasons you want to quit? Make a list of these and keep it in your wallet as a constant reminder.
- Talk about quitting with someone who can support you. The amount of support you get can be a key factor in helping you succeed.
- See next page for resources that can help.

Getting ready to quit

- Set a quit date. Mark it on your calendar and begin to get ready for that day.
- Look for others to support you. They might include your doctor, a friend, or a family member.
- Medications can be a powerful tool to help you quit. Studies show they can double your chances of success. Talk to your doctor about your options.
- Encourage family members and friends who smoke to refrain from doing so around you.
- Plan healthy things to do for those times when you would usually have a cigarette. Instead of your cigarette break, take a walk or do an errand with a friend.
- Try going without a cigarette for a certain amount of time each day. Cravings pass whether you smoke or not.
- Practice saying “No, thanks, I don’t smoke” when someone offers you a cigarette.
- Throw away your cigarettes and remove ashtrays. Clean areas where you often smoke, like your car or kitchen.

After you quit

- Know what to expect. The worst will be over in a few days. Some physical withdrawal symptoms can last up to 3 weeks.
- Make special plans for the first few days. Keep busy with smoke-free activities, like going to a movie.

- If you crave a cigarette, you can try:
 - Taking a walk or doing some other activity you enjoy.
 - Drinking some water or juice.
 - Calling someone to get support.
 - Practicing deep breathing to reduce stress.
- Avoid having “just one” cigarette. It’s easy to start smoking again after just one.
- Be patient with yourself. You may feel irritable or tired from the withdrawal symptoms.
- Take it one day at a time. Do what you can to get through the day without smoking.
- Know your smoking triggers. If coffee, alcohol, or stress makes you want to smoke, be ready to handle those times without a cigarette.
- If you’re worried about gaining weight, choose healthy foods and stay active. The amount of weight gain from quitting is less than people think. You can lessen it by planning ahead.
- If you do slip and smoke, go easy on yourself. Lots of people slip and still go on to quit. Pick yourself up and try again.

Medications can help you quit smoking

With a doctor’s prescription, over-the-counter nicotine replacement therapies are available at no cost to members. Other smoking cessation prescription medication benefits vary. Talk to your doctor about which medical options might be right for you.

Additional resources

For more information, tools, classes, and other resources:

- Search kp.org/mydoctor
- Contact your local Health Education Department
- **Call our Kaiser Permanente Wellness Coaching Center.** Our coaches can help you create—and stick with—a plan to help you quit tobacco. Call 1-866-251-4514 (toll free), 6 a.m. to midnight daily, to schedule your appointment.
- Visit kp.org/healthylifestyles to access our “Breathe” Healthy Lifestyles program, an online plan to quit smoking, tailored especially for you.
- Visit kpdoc.org/quittingtobacco to learn more about medications to help you quit.
- **California Smokers’ Helpline** at 1-800-NO BUTTS (662-8887) provides free counseling in multiple languages.

If you are hit, hurt, or threatened by a partner or spouse, this can seriously affect your health. There is help. Call the **National Domestic Violence Hotline** at 1-800-799-7233 or visit ndvh.org.

