

# Make a commitment to quit

## TIPS TO QUIT SMOKING

**If you smoke, you already know that it's bad for your health.** But did you know how much your health could improve *just 48 hours* after you take your last puff? After 20 minutes, your blood pressure and pulse rate drops. After 8 hours, your blood oxygen level returns to normal. After 24 hours, your risk of a heart attack drops. And after two days, you can smell and taste better. And those are just the short-term benefits!

When you commit to quit, you'll enjoy years and years of health benefits that you just wouldn't get if you kept smoking. And you deserve a long, healthy life. These tips can help you get it.

### Why quit?

If you're looking for a good reason to stop smoking, here's a big one: After one year of quitting, your risk of heart disease will drop by more than half. If you're not trying to quit, why not? A little tobacco surely can't beat these health benefits:

- Lower risk of heart disease
- Lower risk of lung problems
- Lower risk of cancer
- Lower risk of stroke
- Lower risk of blood vessel disease
- Lower risk of ulcers
- Lower risk of gum disease
- Less coughing, sinus infections and shortness of breath
- Less wrinkles
- More energy

In fact, after five to 15 years of not smoking, you'll end up having the same level of health as people *who have never smoked*.

### Preparing to quit

Smoking is a hard habit to break. So you may need some help preparing for the challenge. These tips can help:

- **Ask around:** Talk to your doctor about quitting. He or she can suggest medicines or other ways to help you quit. Ask people at work how they kicked the habit. Or research classes and support groups near where you live.
- **Ease into it:** Smoke less cigarettes each day than you normally would. Or try smoking only half a cigarette. Just don't inhale deeper on each puff or you'll be getting the same amount of nicotine.
- **Buddy up:** It's easier to quit when you've got support. So strike up a friendly competition with a friend or family member to keep the urge away.
- **Clean house:** Clean out ashtrays, drapes, your car, your office — or anything else that smells smoky. And throw away spare lighters or matches.
- **Plan ahead:** Pick a drop-dead date to quit. Then smoke less and less until that date arrives. Then stop.
- **Focus on your behaviour:** When do you really want a cigarette? Focus on the reasons why, and try to avoid them.
- **Start exercising:** Just knowing you're doing something good for your body can motivate you to keep up a healthy lifestyle.

**BE WELL** — After only one year of quitting, your risk of heart disease will drop by *more than half*.



## It's quit time

The day has finally come: your first smoke-free day. Now's the chance to test your willpower. It won't be an easy day. But when you finish it — smoke free — it will be a rewarding one. Here are some tips to get you through:

- Throw away your cigarettes and lighters.
- Keep busy.
- Drink lots of water.
- Try deep breathing tapes or listen to relaxation tapes.
- Go to the gym.
- Avoid places where smoking is going on.
- Chew sugarless gum and candy, toothpicks or carrot sticks to resist the "oral urge."

Success! Give yourself a reward for a hard day's work. Watch your favorite movie, enjoy your favorite meal or do something else you enjoy. Even if you sneaked a cigarette or two, you should still take time out to congratulate your efforts.

## Coping with cravings

Over the next few weeks you could feel angry, on edge or irritable. Or maybe you have more physical symptoms like coughing or fatigue or headaches. These symptoms — called withdrawal — are perfectly normal. Don't give in! When the urge comes on strong to smoke, these tips can help:

- Take deep breaths until you relax and forget the urge.
- Drink water slowly, or hold the water in your mouth for a while.
- Snack on some vegetables.
- Get up and move around.
- Give yourself a task to keep your mind busy.

## Looking ahead to a smoke-free future

Maybe you'll never smoke again. Or maybe you'll have a setback. Whatever happens, the most important thing is to never give up on your mission to quit. Here are some good ways to keep the momentum going:

- Remind yourself of the hours, days and weeks you've already gotten through.
- Avoid the triggers that make you smoke, like drinking coffee or alcohol, stress or other smokers.
- Join a support group, or sign up for a program to help you quit.
- Start a money jar with the money you save by not buying cigarettes.
- Reward yourself for your willpower.

And remember: even though you can't see the good changes going on in your body, they are happening.

**Commit to quit.** Resolution to make lifestyle changes, no matter how small, will make a big difference.

### Sources:

How to Quit Smoking. Developed through a partnership of The Ohio State University Medical Center Mount Carmel and OhioHealth, Columbus, Ohio. Available for use as a public service without copyright restrictions at [www.healthinfotranslations.com](http://www.healthinfotranslations.com).

Quit Smoking: Benefits. American Lung Association. Accessed August 7, 2009 at [www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org).

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## Smoke-free sites

Check out the following sites to help you stay informed — and smoke free

**Centers for Disease Control (CDC)**  
[www.cdc.gov/tobacco](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco)

**National Cancer Institute (NCI)**  
[www.nci.nih.gov](http://www.nci.nih.gov)

**Nicotine Anonymous**  
[www.nicotine-anonymous.org](http://www.nicotine-anonymous.org)

**Smoke Free**  
[www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov)

