

You Can Quit Smoking

Quitting smoking is the single most important step a smoker can take to improve the length and quality of her or his life. There is strong evidence that smokers attempting to quit could at least double their chances of success if they were assisted by clinicians.

It's not too late to quit smoking

Smoking causes serious health problems and disease. If you quit smoking now, you can:

- Improve blood flow to your heart, brain, and other organs of your body.
- Have more energy.
- Have better health overall.

And even more important, if you quit now you will lower your chances of having:

- Heart disease.
- Lung cancer.
- Emphysema.
- Problems with breathing.

Here's how you can quit:

You can quit even if you have smoked for many years. It can be hard to stop. You may have to try many times before you do it. Never say "I can't." Keep trying.

There are things you can do you help yourself quit smoking:

Set a quit date.

Set a date when you will stop smoking. Don't buy cigarettes that will carry you past your last day.

Throw your cigarettes and ashtrays away.

Don't make it easy to start smoking again. If you keep cigarettes and ashtrays in the house you are more likely to smoke.

Get support from family and friends.

Ask for their encouragement. Ask them not to offer you cigarettes.

Enroll in a support program.

Many insurance plans have free tobacco cessation programs. Professional health coaches and nurses can help with tools, coaching and support, plus **discounts** for wellness-related products and services. Call your insurance company and find out if they have a program and how you can enroll.

The state of Texas also has a free tobacco cessation program. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

Spend time with people who don't smoke.

Think of yourself as a nonsmoker. Don't go to places where there are a lot of smokers, such as bars. Sit in the nonsmoking section of restaurants.

Start an exercise program.

As you become more fit, you will not want the nicotine effects in your body. Regular exercise will also help you not gain weight when you quit smoking.

Keep yourself busy.

You may find you don't know what to do with your hands. You can:

- Read or draw.
- Fix things.
- Make a plastic model.
- Knit or do needlework.
- Do a puzzle.

You may also be used to having something in your mouth. You can:

- Chew gum.
- Eat carrots or celery.

Take on new activities.

- Learn a new craft.
- Join an exercise group.
- Learn ways to relax and manage stress.
- Take a class.
- Join a study group at your local place of worship.
- Go out with your family or friends.

Join a quit-smoking program.

It may be easier for you to quit if you have the support of a group.

Think about using nicotine replacements.

Nicotine is the drug in tobacco that makes it hard to quit. The nicotine gum and patches help you cut your craving for nicotine. You can get nicotine gum or patches at your drug store. You do not need a prescription. Or your doctor can prescribe a nicotine spray or inhaler for you.

Think about asking your MCNT physician for a prescription medicine.

There are medicines to help you quit.

You can learn to live without cigarettes in your daily life. You can quit and quit for good.