

MEDfacts

An Educational Health Series From National Jewish Health®



Reasons to Quit Smoking

It is important to decide for yourself that you want to quit. Many people have mixed feelings about this - it is normal to both want to quit and want to continue tobacco use. Below is a list of reasons that might help you quit for good. Check reasons that are important to you:

Food tastes better

A cigarette's smell and bitter taste can override the taste of other foods. And smokers have fewer and less sensitive taste buds on their tongues than people who do not smoke.



Clothes and hair smell better

Cigarette smoke has a powerful odor that makes clothing and hair smell long after a cigarette was extinguished.

Healthier family

Secondhand smoke causes disease and premature death in children and adults who do not smoke. Specifically, it can cause lung cancer, heart disease, respiratory tract infections in infants and children, and it can aggravate asthma symptoms.

Healthier pets

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) lists tobacco smoke as a harmful toxin for pets based on many research studies. For example, a study at Tufts University found that cats living with smokers are twice as likely to develop malignant lymphoma. A study at Colorado State University found a higher incidence of nasal tumors and cancer of the sinus in dogs living in a home with smokers.



More money for budget

If smokers multiply the amount of money they spend on cigarettes each day by 365 (the number of days in a year), the total may surprise them. That's a lot of money each year they could be spending on other things: bills, hobbies, vacations, college funds, etc. And the health benefits of quitting smoking mean they also will save money on health care costs in the future.

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- Cheaper life insurance**
 Life insurance companies charge higher premiums to smokers and tobacco chewers. The price a person pays for life insurance premiums is linked to risk. There are many health risks related to tobacco.
- Stronger bones**
 Studies have shown a direct relationship between tobacco use and decreased bone density. Most studies on the effects of smoking suggest that smoking increases the risk of having a fracture.
- Better sleep**
 Each night, a smoker's body goes through withdrawal from nicotine which leads to sleep disturbances. Research shows that smokers are four times as likely as nonsmokers to report feeling unrested after a night's sleep, and smokers spend less time in deep sleep and more time in light sleep than nonsmokers.
- Whiter teeth, prettier smile**
 The tar in cigarettes stains teeth a yellow or brownish color. Quitting smoking stops the discoloration from progressing.
- Reduced risk of heart attack & stroke**
 Smokers are twice as likely to die from heart attacks and are more likely to have strokes than nonsmokers. However, just one year after quitting smoking, the excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a continuing smoker's. Five to 15 years after quitting, the risk of stroke is reduced to that of a nonsmoker.
- Reduced risk of lung & other cancers**
 Smoking increases a person's risk of many types of cancer, not just lung cancer. However, 10 years after quitting smoking, the lung cancer death rate is about half that of a continuing smoker's. The risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, cervix, and pancreas decrease, as well, after quitting.
- Fewer wrinkles**
 Smoking can accelerate the aging process of a person's skin, which leads to more wrinkles. Smoking impairs blood flow to the skin and damages collagen and elastin (the fibers that give skin strength and elasticity).
- Freedom from the smoking section**
 If a person wants to light up a cigarette in a public area, he or she is often limited to a designated section, far from the action and other people. Many states and cities have issued bans on smoking at all in public areas.
- Better dating odds**
 Clothes and hair that smell like cigarette smoke can be a turn-off on a first date. The yellowed teeth and fingers and nagging cough often caused by smoking could ruin the chances of a second date, as well.
- Improved chance of pregnancy**
 Smoking has an adverse impact on fertility and male potency. According to research, women have a 40 percent lower chance of getting pregnant if they smoke. Women smokers also have a higher incidence of infertility. In addition, men who smoke cigarettes have a lower sperm count and more abnormal sperm than men who don't smoke.
- Healthier pregnancy and baby**
 Smoking increases the mother's risk for potentially serious complications. Research



shows that women who smoke during pregnancy are three times more likely to have a low birth-weight baby. The greater the number of cigarettes smoked during pregnancy, the greater the risk of perinatal death (stillbirth or death during the first four weeks of life).

❑ **Improved stamina when exercising**

Smoking introduces carbon monoxide into a person's blood, which reduces the ability to transport oxygen. This means less oxygen is carried to the body's cells, heart and lungs. A decrease in oxygen makes it much more difficult to participate in sports or even walk up a flight of stairs.



❑ **Reduced coughing and wheezing**

Many people who smoke experience excessive coughing and wheezing. One to nine months after quitting, coughing and shortness of breath decrease. And the lung's cilia (tiny hair-like structures) begin working properly again. Cilia help to handle mucus, clean the lungs, and reduce the risk of infection.

❑ **Better role model**

Children tend to mimic what their parents and siblings do. Research has found that children of smokers are much more likely to become smokers themselves. But when both parents quit smoking, the odds of their children becoming regular smokers goes down by about 40 percent.

❑ **Longer, healthier life**

Based on the difference in life expectancy between smokers and nonsmokers, each cigarette is equivalent to taking 11 minutes off a person's life. That's time a person could be spending with family and friends in his or her golden years.

The benefits of giving up smoking far outweigh the temporary pleasure of smoking.

Note: This information is provided to you as an educational service of LUNG LINE® (1-800-222-LUNG). It is not meant to be a substitute for consulting with your own physician.

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