Quitting Tobacco Use

Benefits of quitting
If you quit smoking right now . . .¹

- **Within 20 minutes**, your heart rate and blood pressure drop.
- **After 8 hours**, the oxygen levels in your blood return to normal.
- **Within 3 months**, your circulation and lung function improves.
- **Within 9 months**, you will cough less and breathe easier.
- **After 1 year**, your risk of heart disease is cut in half.
- **After 5 years**, your risk of cervical cancer and stroke return to normal.
- **After 10 years**, you will have decreased your risk of developing cancer.
- **After 15 years**, your risk of coronary heart disease is the same as a non-smoker’s.


The 3 challenges of tobacco addiction
Nicotine is a chemical in tobacco products your body craves. It is part of the reason why tobacco is an addiction. To be successful at quitting tobacco use, your body needs to get rid of nicotine and overcome the physical, emotional and behavioral addiction.

- **Physical addiction**: When you use tobacco, nicotine travels to your brain. In 10 seconds, the chemical reaction gives you feelings of pleasure and relaxation. These feelings come from a release of dopamine in the brain. Your body creates more nicotine receptors as you increase tobacco use. This leads to a physical addiction or nicotine dependency. When you quit tobacco, your brain continues...
to crave nicotine. Your body will go through withdrawal until the number of nicotine receptors returns to the amount they were before you started using tobacco. **Replace tobacco with other physical activities that you enjoy, such as walking, biking or group sports.**

- **Emotional addiction:** Nicotine produces feelings of pleasure. As you rid your body of nicotine, it can affect your mood and how you feel. If you used tobacco to manage stress or your emotions, **find family or friends to support you** instead of using tobacco for support. Look for online support groups and communities. Be honest about how you feel, identify and address the emotions you have about tobacco. Develop new coping skills to use while you quit.

- **Behavioral addition:** Tobacco use is a learned behavior. Breaking the tobacco habit means **creating new behaviors** to replace it. This can take as little as 3 weeks. Think about when you are most likely to use tobacco and find new behaviors that will support your changed lifestyle.

The 5 steps to quit

1. **Talk to your provider or pharmacist.** Quitting “cold turkey” is not your only choice. Talk to your provider or pharmacist about quit aids, nicotine replacement products, support groups, quality websites and smart phone apps to help you quit. Some products are available without a prescription.

2. **Set a quit date.** Pick a date within the next few weeks to quit tobacco. This will give you time to prepare. On your quit day, change your regular routine. Pick a date that is less busy or stressed and keeps you from social situations (a night out with friends) that may tempt you to use tobacco.

3. **Tell family and friends you plan to quit.** Having support is key to successful quitting. Share with your family and friends how they can help, such as being your “quit buddy” or doing tobacco-free activities with you like going to the movies or playing basketball.

4. **Prepare for your quit date.**
   - Cut down on the amount of tobacco products you use now. It will make your quit date easier, such as only smoking half a cigarette at a time.
• Use sugarless gum, carrots, celery, hard candy, toothpicks or straws to replace tobacco when you have the urge for something in your mouth.

• Throw away all tobacco products, matches, lighters and ashtrays from home, car and work.

• Clean your home, car and clothes to remove tobacco odors.

• Have your dentist clean your teeth to remove tobacco stains.

5. **Plan a reward system for quitting.** Reward yourself for choosing healthy behaviors that replace tobacco use and meet certain milestones. Set reasonable goals, such as milestones of 1 day, 1 week, 1 month, 3 months and 6 months. Think of small and large rewards that will motivate you. Create a money jar from saved tobacco money. Use it to go out to dinner, pay bills or get new exercise equipment.

**Preventing a slip or relapse**

A **slip** is using a small amount of tobacco one or two times after quitting. It is a part of your current quit attempt. A **relapse** is returning to the amount of tobacco you used before you quit. Focus on slips and make changes to your quit plan to increase your success.

Think about your answers to these questions so that you can better understand what led to your tobacco use.

• What was I doing?

• Who was I with?

• What was I thinking before using tobacco?

• How was I feeling emotionally right before I decided to use tobacco?

• What trigger(s) or stress was hard to manage? What other factors led to my decision to use tobacco?

• What else do I need to create or implement into my quit plan to overcome these barriers? What might I do to be successful?

• To what extent did I react automatically and abandon my quit plan?
• What strategies in my quit plan can I use next time so it doesn’t happen again?

• Who or what could I have with me to support my decision to not use tobacco?

• What tobacco products do I still have with me that I need to remove?

Understanding and coping with withdrawal

Withdrawal is your body’s way of ending tobacco dependency. The signs of withdrawal are temporary and include:

• Feeling depressed
• Problems sleeping
• Being angry or irritable
• Feeling anxious or nervous
• Problems concentrating
• Feeling restless
• Headaches
• Increased appetite or weight gain
• A slower heart rate

You may notice signs 2 to 3 hours after you last used tobacco. Signs may peak 2 to 3 days later, depending on how much and how long you used tobacco.

To cope with withdrawal:

• Talk to your doctor about nicotine replacement products that are safe for you to use.
• Talk to your doctor about ways to deal with physical signs of withdrawal, which may include dry mouth, cough, sore throat, nasal drip or mucus, headache, dizziness, sleeping problems, problems concentrating or hunger.
• Tell your quit buddies that you plan to quit and let them know that you may need to talk, cry, laugh or get involved in an activity to get through withdrawal.
• Get support:
  ▶ Talk to your doctor.
  ▶ Find a counselor.
  ▶ Gather family members.
  ▶ Talk with friends.
  ▶ Talk with someone from my faith/religious group.
  ▶ Share with close neighbors.
  ▶ Tell people with whom I share hobbies.
  ▶ Join an online community.
  ▶ Call a quit line.
• Drink plenty of water and other fluids to flush nicotine from your body.
• Cut back on caffeine. Some people report feeling anxious and having trouble sleeping even if the same amount of caffeine is in the diet.
• Increase your exercise. Physical activity helps to release energy and keeps you focused on something other than tobacco.

Understanding and coping with cravings
The urge to use tobacco will come and go. There are people, places, things and situations that may trigger the urge to use tobacco. You won’t be able to avoid all triggers, so it’s important to make a plan for how you will handle them. Cravings often last 5 to 10 minutes. Make a plan to wait it out or to do an activity to distract yourself. For example, to avoid tobacco when driving a car, keep gum or mints in the car.

Resources to help you quit
Quit lines:
• American Cancer Society 1-800-227-2345
• American Lung Association 1-800-586-4872
• BeTobaccoFree.gov Smoking Quit Line 1-877-448-7848
• Ohio Tobacco Quit Line 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)

Quitting Tobacco Use
Ohio State Clinics:

- **Ross Heart Hospital Smoking Cessation Clinic**
  420 W. 10th Ave
  Columbus, OH 43210
  614-293-0932

- **The Lung Center, Tobacco Dependence Clinic**
  2050 Kenny Road,
  Suite 2200
  Columbus, OH 43221
  614-293-4925

Websites:


- betobaccofree.gov at: [https://betobaccofree.hhs.gov/](https://betobaccofree.hhs.gov/)

- March of Dimes at: [https://www.marchofdimes.org/pregnancy/smoking-during-pregnancy.aspx](https://www.marchofdimes.org/pregnancy/smoking-during-pregnancy.aspx)

- MedlinePlus at: [https://medlineplus.gov/quittingsmoking.html](https://medlineplus.gov/quittingsmoking.html)

- Ohio Partners for Smoke Free Families at: [http://ohiosmokefreefamilies.org/](http://ohiosmokefreefamilies.org/)

- Smokefree.gov

Mobile apps:
Search your mobile device’s app store for quit smoking apps, such as **QuitGuide** and **QuitSTART**.