

Good Health Matters
Quitting Smoking and **YOU**

Smoking Facts and How It Affects Your Health



NorthCare Network

How Smoking Affects You

SMOKING is NOT good for your **health**. *In fact, smoking is an addiction, and it “is the single leading cause of preventable death and disease in the United States.”* In this brochure, you will learn many reasons **why quitting smoking, also called smoking cessation, matters.**

Why Quit Smoking? There may be many reasons why you started smoking, such as your parents or friends did, or you once thought it was a cool thing to do. But cigarettes contain **nicotine, a highly addictive drug**, that often leads to tobacco dependency. Cigarettes contain **hundreds of chemicals, many that may be harmful**. Research shows that *smoking increases risks of many health disorders*, including **heart disease, high blood pressure, and lung cancer**. Some diseases, like **chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)** and **emphysema**, are not reversible. So, the sooner you quit smoking, the better.

Before you quit smoking, you need to know **why you are stopping**. Without strong reasons, such as improving your health, saving money, or keeping others around you healthier by not smoking, **it will be harder to quit**. *It may take several attempts as quitting smoking is a hard thing to do. Anyone can do it, but it takes will power to quit.*



It's Your Choice.

Benefits of quitting smoking include:

- *Decreasing health risks of chronic diseases*
- *Creating a safer environment for family and others*
- *Having more time to do other activities*
- *Looking healthier, by having smoother skin and cleaner teeth and nails*
- *Smelling cleaner*
- *Saving money*

QUITTING SMOKING helps improve or prevent such conditions as **high blood pressure, heart diseases, lung cancer, and smoke-related diseases.**



Health Benefits Over Time

BY QUITTING SMOKING, you can have short- and long-term **health benefits**. As soon as you quit smoking your body starts to recover, and you will have a better chance of living a longer, healthier life.

What Happens to your body when you quit?

- Within 2 days, blood pressure, oxygen level, and heart rate return to normal.
- Within 3 days, your sense of smell and taste improves.
- Within 4 days, energy levels return to normal.
- Cholesterol levels improve, lowering your risk of heart disease.
- Muscles, bones, and immune system all get stronger.

Within 2 weeks, bad breath is gone, teeth are cleaner, and blood circulation is normal in gums.

Within 4 months, both circulation and breathing improve (with less coughing and wheezing).

Within 1 year, risk of coronary heart disease is cut in half.

Within 5 years, risk of stroke falls to same as non-smoker and many cancer risks decrease.

Within 10 years, risk of dying from lung cancer is cut in half.

Within 15 years, risk of coronary heart disease is as low as non-smoker and risk is lower for COPD.

Quitting is Difficult

It's not your imagination. Quitting smoking is **hard to do**. It is common to try several times before successfully quitting.

Some smokers try to quit without assistance. This is called quitting **“Cold Turkey,”** and is difficult. Often people use aids like nicotine patches, lozenges, or gum to help with nicotine cravings during withdrawal.

Don't feel guilty if you have a **slip** or **relapse**. Try to figure out why it happened and learn from it. Then reset and restart the process again.

It is common for people to try **6 to 8 times before they can quit**. With each relapse, **you learn more about yourself so that next time you will be more successful**.

