



# You Can Quit Smoking

## If you smoke, think about these facts . . .

- Smoking harms your health and the health of anyone who inhales secondhand smoke.
- More than a million people successfully quit smoking every year in the U.S.
- There are many ways to stop smoking. You can join a quit smoking program, call a quit smoking telephone helpline, or make a plan to quit on your own.
- Even if you have tried quitting before, keep trying. Many people try a number of times before they stop for good.
- Most people who try to stop smoking will succeed in the end.

## Quitting helps you right away – and in the future

*After 24 hours:* The oxygen levels in your blood go back to normal. The chance of heart attack goes down.

*After 1 to 9 months:* Circulation, smell, and taste improve. Your lungs work better. You have more energy and fewer colds.

*After 1 year:* Your risk of heart disease is cut in half compared to what it was when you smoked.

*After 5 years:* Your risk of stroke drops significantly.

*After 10 years:* The risk of lung cancer drops to half that of people who still smoke.

## Getting motivated to quit

- Think about what you like about smoking. What don't you like? Make a list and compare your likes and dislikes.
- When the list of what you don't like is longer than what you do like about smoking, decide that you are ready to quit.
- Look over your reasons for quitting. They may be for your own health, or for the health of your family. Other reasons might include saving money or having more energy.
- Keep your list of reasons with you and read it over a number of times during the day.

## Getting ready to quit

- Set a quit date. Mark it on your calendar and begin to get ready for that day.
- Look for others to support you. They might include your doctor, a quit smoking class, a friend, or a family member. Ask ex-smokers how they quit.
- Consider medications to help you quit. Medications can help reduce cravings after your quit date so you can focus on your quit plan. Talk to your doctor about your options.

- Plan healthy things to do for those times when you would usually have a cigarette. Instead of your usual cigarette break, take a walk or do an errand with a friend.
- Try going without a cigarette for a certain amount of time each day. Cravings pass whether you smoke or not. Plan to do something that takes your mind off smoking.
- Practice saying “No, thanks, I don't smoke” when someone offers you a cigarette.
- Get your teeth cleaned.
- Get rid of all tobacco products. Throw away your cigarettes and remove ashtrays. Clean areas where you often smoke like your car or kitchen.

## Once you quit

- Know what to expect. The worst will be over in a few days. But physical withdrawal symptoms can last up to 3 weeks.
- Make special plans for the first few days. Keep busy with smoke-free activities, like going to a movie.
- If you crave a cigarette, you can try:
  - Taking a walk or doing some other activity you enjoy.



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- Drinking some water or juice.
  - Calling someone to get support.
  - Deep breathing to reduce stress.
- Avoid having “just one” cigarette. It is easy to start smoking again after just one.
  - Be patient with yourself. You are no longer getting nicotine from cigarettes. You may feel irritable or tired from the withdrawal symptoms.
  - Take it one day at a time. Do what you can to get through the day without smoking.
  - Know your smoking triggers. If coffee, alcohol, or stress makes you want to smoke, be ready to handle those times without a cigarette.
  - If you do slip and smoke, go easy on yourself. Lots of people slip and still go on to quit. Pick yourself up and try again.
  - If you are worried about gaining weight, choose healthy foods and stay active. The amount of weight gain from quitting is less than people think. You can lessen it by planning ahead.

## Quit-smoking medicines can help you

Medicines that help people stop smoking are recommended for

most people. Visit [kp.org/tobaccomedications](http://kp.org/tobaccomedications) or talk to your doctor to learn more about which medicines might be right for you. If you participate in a Kaiser Permanente quit program, you can get quit smoking medications at your co-pay.

### The nicotine patch, lozenge, and gum

- The patch provides nicotine through your skin all day long.
- The lozenge and gum provide nicotine through your mouth as you need it.
- All can help lessen withdrawal symptoms.
- All can be purchased over-the-counter without a prescription.
- Most of the time you can get the patch, lozenge, or gum with a co-pay fee as part of your coverage.
- All work better when used with a quit smoking program.
- Are generally not for pregnant or nursing women (ask your doctor).

### Bupropion SR (Wellbutrin, Zyban)

- Can lessen cravings for cigarettes and help ease withdrawal symptoms.
- Should not be used by some people—that’s why a prescription is needed.

- Can be obtained with a co-pay fee as part of most members’ drug coverage.
- Works better when used with a quit smoking program.

### Additional resources

- Want an online plan to quit smoking, tailored especially for you? Check out our “Breathe” Healthy Lifestyles program at [kp.org/healthylifestyles](http://kp.org/healthylifestyles).
- Contact your Kaiser Permanente Health Education Center or Department to learn more about Kaiser Permanente’s quit smoking programs.
- Visit [kp.org/tobaccomedications](http://kp.org/tobaccomedications) to learn more about medicines to help you quit.
- Call the California Smoker’s Helpline: 1-800-766-2888
- American Lung Association: 1-800-LUNG-USA
- Nicotine Anonymous at [nicotine-anonymous.org](http://nicotine-anonymous.org)
- Connect to our Web site at [kp.org](http://kp.org) to access health and drug encyclopedias, interactive programs, health classes, and more.
- Visit [kp.org/quitsmoking](http://kp.org/quitsmoking)
- If you are hit, hurt or threatened by a partner or spouse, this can seriously affect your health. There is help. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 or connect to [ndvh.org](http://ndvh.org).

This information is not intended to diagnose or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor. If you have questions or need more information about your medication, please speak to your pharmacist. Kaiser Permanente does not endorse any brand name: any similar products may be used.