

You Can Quit Smoking



List your reasons for quitting—if not for your own health, then for the health of your family.

If you smoke, consider this . . .

- Over 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, a quit smoking telephone helpline, or make a plan to quit on your own.
- Even if you have tried quitting before, it is important to keep at it. Many smokers make a few attempts before they stop for good.
- Most people who try to stop smoking eventually succeed.
- Smoking harms your health and the health of anyone who inhales your secondhand smoke. To limit others' exposure to smoke before you quit, smoke outside, wear a jacket while smoking, and remove it before going back inside.

After you quit, your body will immediately start to heal.

After 24 hours: The oxygen levels in your blood return to normal. The chance of heart attack is reduced.

After one to nine months: Circulation, smell, and taste improve. You have better lung function, more energy, and fewer colds.

After one year: Your excess risk of heart disease is half that of a smoker.

After five years: Your risk of stroke drops significantly.

After ten years: The risk of lung cancer drops to one half of smokers.

Thinking about quitting

- Decide that you are ready to stop smoking. Get motivated to quit.
- List your reasons for quitting—if not for your own health, then for the health of your family. Other reasons may include saving money or having more energy.
- Review your reasons for quitting. Think about them while at work and at home.

Preparing yourself for quitting

1. Set a quit date. Mark it on your calendar and begin to prepare for that day.
2. Support is very helpful. Talk to your doctor or other health care professional, join a stop smoking class, or get your family and friends involved. Ask ex-smokers how they quit.
3. Plan healthy alternatives for those times when you would usually have a cigarette. Instead of a cigarette, plan to take a walk or do an errand with a friend.
4. Practice going without a cigarette. Cravings pass whether you smoke or not. Plan to do something that takes your mind off smoking.
5. Get your teeth cleaned.
6. Get rid of all tobacco products. Throw away your cigarettes and remove ashtrays. Clean areas where you regularly smoke, like your car or kitchen.

Quitting

1. Know what to expect. The worst will be over in just a few days, but physical withdrawal symptoms may last one to three weeks.
2. Make special plans for the first few days. Keep busy. Do things you can't do while smoking, like going to a movie.
3. If you are having a craving for a cigarette—do something! Get up and take a walk. Go get some water or juice. Call someone to give you support.
4. Avoid having “just one” cigarette. It is easy to start smoking again after just one.
5. Drink plenty of water to help flush the nicotine out of your body.
6. Be patient with yourself. You are no longer getting nicotine from cigarettes and may feel irritable or tired from the withdrawal symptoms.
7. Take a “one day at a time” attitude. Do what you can to get through the day without smoking.
8. Know your smoking triggers. If coffee, alcohol, or stress is connected to smoking, be ready to handle those times without a cigarette.
9. Lower your stress level. Practice deep breathing and other relaxation techniques. If possible, increase the amount of physical activity you do.

10. If you do slip and smoke a cigarette, go easy on yourself. Learn from the experience and recommit yourself to quitting.
11. If you have concerns about gaining weight, choose healthy foods and stay active. The amount of weight gain from quitting is less than people think and can be decreased by planning ahead.

Quit smoking aids

Medications that help individuals stop smoking are recommended for everyone, unless you have certain medical conditions. Please consult with your doctor or other health care professional.

The nicotine patch . . .

- provides nicotine to the body in a continuous amount
- can help reduce withdrawal symptoms
- can be purchased over-the-counter without a prescription
- most members can obtain the patch with a co-pay as part of their coverage
- is most effective when used with a quit smoking program
- is generally not for pregnant or nursing women (consult your health care professional)

Bupropion SR (Wellbutrin, Zyban) . . .

- can reduce cravings for cigarettes and help ease withdrawal symptoms
- should not be used by some people—that's why a prescription is required

- can be obtained with a co-pay as part of most members' drug coverage
- is most effective when used with a quit smoking program

Other resources

- Want an online plan to quit smoking tailored especially for you? Check out our “Breathe” Healthy Lifestyles program at kp.org/healthylifestyles.
- Call your Health Education Department to learn more about Kaiser Permanente's quit smoking programs and free, quit smoking telephone helplines available locally, such as the California Smoker's Helpline (1-800-766-2888)
- American Lung Association (1-800-LUNG-USA)
- Nicotine Anonymous at nicotine-anonymous.org
- Check your *Kaiser Permanente Healthwise Handbook*
- Call the Kaiser Permanente Healthphone at 1-800-332-7563. For TTY, call 1-800-777-9059.
- Visit our Web site at members.kp.org.

The information presented here is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of information or medical 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 your physician or other medical professional. If you have questions or need additional information about your medication, please speak to your pharmacist. Kaiser Permanente does not endorse any brand names; any similar products may be used.