

Choosing a Tobacco-Free Life

Take the first steps towards quitting — take charge of your health to lower your risk for disease and live a fuller, healthier life.

There are many reasons you could quit smoking—for your family, for your friends, even for the environment. But what about quitting for you? You could enjoy a fuller, healthier life by letting go of tobacco.

Choosing a smoke-free life gives your body a break—especially your heart and lungs. When you quit smoking, your heart rate and blood pressure begin to return to normal.

The risk for a heart attack drops sharply after just 1 year, while stroke risk can fall to about the same as a nonsmoker’s after only 2 to 5 years. Quitting also significantly reduces the risk of lung cancer and several other cancers. Even your sense of taste and smell can improve once you stop smoking. Plus, the money spent on tobacco products can be significant. Quitting frees that money up for other uses. Lastly, quitting can make you feel more in charge of your life.

Preparing to Quit

We all want to be in charge of our own lives. The biggest difficulty for many smokers who want to quit is knowing where to begin.

Here are some first steps when you’re ready to let go of tobacco:

Make the decision to quit – This can be a difficult step. You’re likely to have mixed feelings about quitting, which is only natural.

Know why you want to quit – Figure out what your specific reasons are for quitting. You can use those reasons to help motivate you to stick with your plan.

Write down your reasons for quitting – Writing down your reasons can make them more real. Once you’ve written them down, keep that list somewhere that you will see them daily—like on your computer monitor, your medicine cabinet, or even the places that you used to keep your cigarettes. This list can serve as a constant reminder of why you’re letting go of tobacco.

Choosing a tobacco-free life has the potential to help you live a healthier life. Taking charge of your health in this way can make a world of difference for you and your loved ones.

Next Steps

Set a quit date

Tell family, friends, and coworkers of your plan to quit

Anticipate and plan for the challenges you’ll face while quitting

Remove cigarettes and other tobacco products from your home, vehicle, and work

Talk to your healthcare provider about getting help to quit

No matter what stage of the process, smoking cessation programs are available, just visit www.foh.hhs.gov/QUIT.



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