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Quitting Smoking: Steps to Boost Success

Quitting smoking is tough. To have the best chance of quitting and staying tobacco-free, consider these options.

Use telephone counseling programs

You can get quitting strategies and support over the phone, at times that work well for you. Studies have shown that groups taking part in telephone counseling programs double their chances of quitting. There are programs in all 50 states and the District of Columbia that offer free phone-based and online quit programs that link people who want to quit with trained counselors.

The American Cancer Society can tell you about quit-smoking resources near you. These may include classes, support groups, online resources, or referrals to get help paying for medicine.

It's important to have many different sources of support when trying to quit. You will want your family, friends, doctors, and stop-smoking professionals to know about and support your efforts.

Get self-help materials to plan and get through the quitting process

You can use materials to help you quit smoking, no matter where you are in the process. Information is available to help you learn:

- How to get ready to try to quit
- Set up plans to help deal with cravings

- To help keep you from going back to tobacco once you have quit.

Many self-help materials offer proven methods that are easy to follow and can help keep you motivated to stay away from tobacco. Electronic quit aids, such as websites, text messaging programs, and mobile apps are also good materials to use.

Think about using medicines to help you quit

Research has shown that using a quit-smoking medicine can improve your chances of success when trying to quit smoking. These drugs include bupropion (Zyban[®]), varenicline (Chantix[®]), and nicotine replacement in the form of a patch, gum, nasal spray, inhaler, or lozenge.

- **Bupropion** is a prescription drug that acts on chemicals in the brain to help reduce cravings. It does not contain nicotine.
- **Varenicline** is a prescription drug that interferes with nicotine receptors in the brain. It lowers the pleasurable feelings people get from smoking and helps lessen nicotine withdrawal symptoms. It does not contain nicotine.
- **Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) products** contain small amounts of nicotine. When properly used, NRT can help reduce unpleasant physical withdrawal symptoms from cigarettes. This gives you a chance to focus on changing your smoking habit and routines. NRT such as nicotine gum, the nicotine patch, and the nicotine lozenge can be bought without a prescription. It's important to know that NRT has not been studied as much for quitting smokeless tobacco.

Depending on your smoking habits and other attempts to quit, your doctor may recommend using one or more of these medicines. Each product has its own pros and cons, and people may find that one works better for them than another. Talk to your doctor or health care provider about setting up a plan that will work for you.

For more details about any of these medicines and methods, call us or visit our website for helpful information on quitting smoking.

Tips for quitting

Here are some tips to help you quit:

- If you plan on using medicines, talk to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about

which ones may be right for you. Some are started before you quit, and you might need to get a prescription ahead of time.

- Write down your reasons for wanting to quit. Keep the list with you to read when you need a reminder.
- Throw away all of your tobacco and smoking equipment – cigarettes, lighters, matches, and ashtrays. Toss out cigars, loose tobacco, pipes, and anything else that might tempt you.
- Think of all the things you usually do while you smoke. Then come up with other things you can do instead.
- Set a quit date and plan ahead to help deal with cravings. Tell your family, friends, and co-workers about your plans to quit. Get their support.
- Get other things to put in your mouth when you crave a smoke, such as sugar-free gum or mints, carrot sticks, toothpicks, or cinnamon sticks. Learn more [tips to help with cigarette cravings](#)¹ here.
- Stay busy.
- Think ahead, and avoid situations that trigger your urge to smoke.

Call your American Cancer Society at 1-800-227-2345 for more information, ideas, and resources. Quitting tobacco is one of the best things you can do for your health – we want to help you succeed!

To learn more

We have a lot more information that you might find helpful. Explore www.cancer.org² or call our National Cancer Information Center toll-free number, 1-800-227-2345. We're here to help you any time, day or night.

Hyperlinks

1. <http://www.cancer.org/content/cancer/en/healthy/stay-away-from-tobacco/guide-quitting-smoking/quitting-smoking-help-for-cravings-and-tough-situations.html>
2. <http://www.cancer.org/>
3. <http://www.ahrq.gov/professionals/clinicians-providers/guidelines-recommendations/tobacco/index.html>

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