



Time to quit

Quit smoking tips

If you smoke, you don't need to hear how bad it is for you. You already know. But maybe you didn't know just how fast your health could improve by quitting.

If you quit today:

- Your heart would start to recover the very next day
- Your risk of heart disease would drop sharply after two years
- You'd be less at risk for cancer in your mouth, lungs, throat, esophagus, bladder and pancreas

And that's just some of the health benefits. You can count on a brighter smile, bigger savings and more energy, too!

Are you ready to quit?

Maybe you have already taken your last puff or are ready to quit today. That's great. This information will help you keep your resolve to kick the habit for good. Or maybe you want to plan ahead before you quit.

It's okay if you aren't ready now. But you may want to quit at some point. So keep learning and preparing yourself. Many smokers do quit. You can, too.

Why it's hard to do

It's nicotine. When you smoke, it spreads powerful, pleasing feelings throughout your body. Plus, the act of smoking becomes a part of almost everything you do. So when you eat, drive, celebrate, drink coffee or take a break, you feel that pull to smoke.

You may feel grouchy or restless or you may have a hard time concentrating for the first two to three weeks after you quit. Or, you may have trouble sleeping and want to eat more. But you won't feel bad forever, and medicine can help. Using medicines and products like nicotine gum or patches can help with cravings and make it easier to resist smoking.

No smoking, not less smoking

You may be thinking: *"What if I smoke less and less ... until I don't need to smoke at all?"* It sounds like a good idea. But studies show that even if you smoke less, you'll likely inhale deeper. So you'll still get the same amount of nicotine. What about low-nicotine products? Same story. By inhaling deeper, you can get just as much nicotine as you would with a regular cigarette! The only way to quit smoking is to quit it completely.

Prevent a slip up (smoking one or two cigarettes) or relapse (returning to regular smoking) by avoiding smoking triggers, at least at first. These triggers can include friends who smoke, alcohol and stress. Don't keep cigarettes in your house or car. If you do slip up, stay calm. Remind yourself that you have a plan, and think about how hard you've worked to quit for good.

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Tips to quit

Think about why you want to quit. Maybe you want to protect your heart and your health and live longer. Or maybe you want to be a good role model for your kids or spend your money on something besides cigarettes. Your reason for wanting to change is important. If your reason comes from you — and not someone else — it will be easier for you to try to quit for good. Here are some tips.

- **Join a support group:** You'll hear others' struggles and strategies.
- **Stay busy:** Read a book, tackle a home project or envision your new life.
- **Avoid triggers:** Avoid alcohol, social events or work breaks until you're less tempted.
- **Pack a snack:** Chew gum or eat carrots when you want to smoke.
- **Stay strong:** If you slip up one day, stay positive. And avoid the temptation to keep smoking.

Take charge of tobacco —
get on the path to a healthier you.

Source: Healthwise, Incorporated. Available at www.healthwise.net/aetna. Accessed 1 March 2017.

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