

# Information Regarding Smoking that May Help You Decide to Quit<sup>1</sup>

## Health Consequences of Smoking — Major Conclusions of the 2004 Surgeon General Report

- Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body, causing many diseases and reducing the health of smokers in general.
- Quitting smoking has immediate as well as long-term benefits, reducing risks for diseases caused by smoking and improving health in general.
- Smoking cigarettes with lower machine-measured yields of tar and nicotine provides no clear benefit to health.
- The list of diseases caused by smoking has been expanded to include abdominal aortic aneurysm, acute myeloid leukemia, cataract, cervical cancer, kidney cancer, pancreatic cancer, pneumonia, periodontitis and stomach cancer. These are in addition to diseases previously known to be caused by smoking, including bladder, esophageal, laryngeal, lung, oral and throat cancers, chronic lung diseases and coronary heart and cardiovascular diseases, as well as reproductive effects and sudden infant death syndrome.

## Lung Cancer, Smoking and Secondhand Smoke

- Cigarette smoking causes lung cancer. In fact, smoking tobacco is the major risk factor for lung cancer. In the United States, about 90 percent of lung cancer deaths in men and almost 80 percent of lung cancer deaths in women are due to smoking. People who smoke are 10 to 20 times more likely to get lung cancer or die from lung cancer than people who do not smoke. The longer a person smokes and the more cigarettes smoked each day increases a person's risk for developing lung cancer.
- People who quit smoking have a lower risk of lung cancer than if they had continued to smoke, but their risk is higher than people who never smoked.
- Smoke from other people's cigarettes, known as secondhand smoke, also causes lung cancer. Nonsmokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke at home or work increase their lung cancer risk by 20-30 percent.

## Five Keys for Quitting Smoking

Studies have shown that these five steps will help you quit and quit for good. You have the best chances of quitting if you use them together.

1. Get Ready
2. Get Support
3. Learn new skills and behaviors
4. Get medication and use it correctly.
5. Be prepared for relapse or difficult situations.

### 1. Get Ready

- Set a quit date.
- Change your environment.
  1. Get rid of **ALL** cigarettes and ashtrays in your home, car, and place of work.
  2. Don't let people smoke around you.
- Review your past attempts to quit. Think about what worked and what did not.
- Once you quit, don't smoke—**NOT EVEN A PUFF!**

---

<sup>1</sup> From the following website: [http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit\\_smoking/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/index.htm)

## 2. Get Support and Encouragement

Studies have shown that you have a better chance of being successful if you have help. You can get support in many ways —

- Tell your family, friends, and co-workers that you are going to quit and want their support. Ask them not to smoke around you or leave cigarettes out where you can see them.
- Talk to your health care provider (e.g., doctor, dentist, nurse, pharmacist, psychologist, or smoking cessation coach or counselor).
- Get individual, group, or telephone counseling. Counseling doubles your chances of success.
- The more help you have, the better your chances are of quitting. Programs are available at local hospitals and health centers free. Call your local health department for information about programs in your area.
- Telephone counseling is available at 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

## 3. Learn New Skills and Behaviors

- Try to distract yourself from urges to smoke. Talk to someone, go for a walk, or get busy with a task.
- When you first try to quit, change your routine. Use a different route to work. Drink tea instead of coffee. Eat breakfast in a different place.
- Do something to reduce your stress. Take a hot bath, exercise, or read a book.
- Plan something enjoyable to do every day.
- Drink a lot of water and other fluids.

## 4. Get Medication and Use It Correctly

Medications can help you stop smoking and lessen the urge to smoke.

- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved seven medications to help you quit smoking:
  1. Bupropion SR—Available by prescription.
  2. Nicotine gum—Available over-the-counter.
  3. Nicotine inhaler—Available by prescription.
  4. Nicotine nasal spray—Available by prescription.
  5. Nicotine patch—Available by prescription and over-the-counter.
  6. Nicotine lozenge—Available over-the-counter.
  7. Varenicline tartrate (Chantix) – Available by prescription.
- Ask your health care provider for advice and carefully read the information on the package.
- All of these medications will double your chances of quitting and quitting for good.
- Nearly everyone who is trying to quit can benefit from using a medication. However, if you are pregnant or trying to become pregnant, nursing, under age 18, smoking fewer than 10 cigarettes per day, or have a medical condition, talk to your doctor or other health care provider before taking medications.

## 5. Be Prepared for Relapse or Difficult Situations

Most relapses occur within the first three months after quitting. Don't be discouraged if you start smoking again. Remember, most people try several times before they finally quit. The following are some difficult situations you may encounter:

- **Alcohol.** Avoid drinking alcohol. Drinking lowers your chances of success.
- **Other Smokers.** Being around smoking can make you want to smoke.

- **Weight Gain.** Many smokers will gain some weight when they quit, usually less than 10 pounds. Eat a healthy diet and stay active. Don't let weight gain distract you from your main goal—quitting smoking. Some quit-smoking medications may help delay weight gain.
- **Bad Mood or Depression.** There are a lot of ways to improve your mood other than smoking. Some quit-smoking medications also lessen depression.

If you are having problems with any of these situations, talk to your doctor or other health care provider.

### Special Situations or Conditions

Studies suggest that everyone can quit smoking. Your situation or condition can give you a special reason to quit.

- **Pregnant women/new mothers.** By quitting, you protect your baby's health and your own.
- **Hospitalized patients.** By quitting, you reduce health problems and help healing.
- **Heart attack patients.** By quitting, you reduce your risk of a second heart attack.
- **Lung, head and neck cancer patients.** By quitting, you reduce your chance of a second cancer.
- **Parents of children and adolescents.** By quitting, you protect your children and adolescents from illnesses caused by secondhand smoke.

### Questions to Think About

Think about the following questions before you try to stop smoking. You may want to talk about your answers with your health care provider.

1. Why do you want to quit?
2. When you tried to quit in the past, what helped and what didn't?
3. What will be the most difficult situations for you after you quit? How will you plan to handle them?
4. Who can help you through the tough times? Your family? Friends? Health care provider?
5. What pleasures do you get from smoking? What ways can you still get pleasure if you quit?

### Here are some questions to ask your health care provider.

1. How can you help me to be successful at quitting?
2. What medication do you think would be best for me and how should I take it?
3. What should I do if I need more help?
4. What is smoking withdrawal like? How can I get information on withdrawal?