

Smoking Cessation: A Guide for Patients

The Risks of Long-Term Smoking

- **Lung Disease:** Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema, and chronic bronchitis.
- **Cancer:** Increased risk of lung, throat, mouth, esophagus, pancreas, bladder, and kidney cancers.
- **Cardiovascular Disease:** Higher chances of heart disease, stroke, and hypertension.
- **Other Health Issues:** Reduced immune function, poor wound healing, and decreased overall health.

Benefits of Quitting

- **Short-Term Benefits:** Improved lung function, reduced heart disease risk, and better circulation within weeks to months.
- **Long-Term Benefits:** Significantly lowered risk of cancer, heart disease, stroke, and improved life expectancy.

Effective Strategies to Quit

1. **Set a Date:** Choose a date within the next two weeks to start your journey.
2. **Slowly tapering down on use:** Gradually reducing smoking can minimize withdrawal symptoms and make the transition to being smoke-free more manageable compared to quitting "cold turkey."
 - a. **Set a Reduction Schedule:**
 - Plan to reduce the number of cigarettes smoked daily or weekly.
 - For example, if you smoke 20 cigarettes a day, reduce by one cigarette each day or week.
 - b. **Delay Your First Cigarette:**
 - Gradually delay the time you smoke your first cigarette each day.
 - This reduces your overall daily intake.
 - c. **Increase Intervals Between Smoking:**
 - Extend the time between each cigarette.
 - For instance, if you smoke every hour, try stretching it to every two hours.

d. Track and Limit:

- Keep a smoking diary to track how many cigarettes you smoke and when.
- Identify patterns and choose specific times to eliminate smoking.

e. Create Smoke-Free Zones:

- Designate certain areas where smoking is not allowed, such as your home or car.
- This helps reduce the number of cigarettes smoked daily.

f. Mindful Smoking:

- Smoke only half a cigarette or take fewer puffs.
- This reduces nicotine intake while maintaining the habit in the beginning of your journey.

3. Tell Family and Friends: Gain support from loved

4. Anticipate and Plan for Challenges: Identify triggers and prepare to handle cravings.

5. Consider Using Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT): Patches, gum, lozenges, inhalers, and nasal sprays can help manage withdrawal symptoms.

6. Prescription Medications: Consult your healthcare provider about medications like bupropion (Zyban) or varenicline (Chantix).

7. Behavioral Support: Join a support group, counseling, or a smoking cessation program.

8. Stay Active: Exercise can reduce cravings and withdrawal symptoms.

9. Healthy Diet: Eat nutritious foods to support your body during the quitting process.

10. Avoid Triggers: Stay away from places, people, or situations that make you want to smoke.

11. Reward Yourself: Celebrate milestones and reward yourself for staying smoke-free.

Additional Resources

- **Quitlines:** Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW for free support.
- **Online Support:** Websites like [smokefree.gov](https://www.smokefree.gov) offer resources and support.
- **Mobile Apps:** Download apps designed to help you quit smoking.

Quitting smoking is a journey, and it's okay to seek help along the way. Every step you take towards quitting brings you closer to a healthier, smoke-free life.