

keep at
quitting



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

**GIVE UP
FOR GOOD**

Facts about smoking and how to quit



There's no getting around it, smokes are bad for us and the people around us. They can make us feel bad, affect our looks and cost us a lot of money. And worst of all, they make us more at risk of diseases such as cancer, heart disease, stroke and diabetes — and can even lead to death.

What is nicotine?

Nicotine is the main chemical in tobacco. It's toxic and very addictive. Once you start needing nicotine, you may feel sick without it. You might find it hard to focus or feel nervous, restless, grouchy, or worried.

How smoking affects your health

Cigarette smoke has over 100 toxic chemicals, and at least 70 of those can cause cancer. Within 10 seconds of breathing in smoke, harmful chemicals go from your lungs into your blood and spread everywhere in your body. These chemicals can harm any part of you.

How smoking can mess with your head

More and more evidence shows smoking isn't good for your mental health. It's linked to higher rates of anxiety, panic attacks, depression, and other serious problems.

When you're hooked on nicotine and stop, you might feel worked up, uneasy, cranky, or worried.

Chemicals in smokes harm your health in many ways:

Nicotine makes your veins narrow, which makes your heart work harder and slows down blood to your hands and feet.

Carbon monoxide stops your heart from getting enough oxygen to pump blood.

Over time, your airways swell up, making it hard to breathe.

Sticky tar lines your lungs and chemicals in the smoke can kill the cells that keep your airways clean.

Other chemicals can irritate your eyes, nose, and throat, and some can make your cells grow out of control, leading to cancer.

Smoking causes at least 16 different kinds of cancer.





How smoking can harm you and your baby

Chemicals in tobacco can affect how well sperm work and make it harder to get pregnant. Smoking or vaping during pregnancy can harm both you and your baby.

How smoking affects people around you

Secondhand smoke can hurt anyone who breathes it in, especially babies, kids, and pregnant women. Harmful chemicals from tobacco smoke can stay in the air for hours, on walls, furniture, clothes, and toys.

People who don't smoke but live with someone who does, have up to 30% more chance of getting heart disease and up to 30% more chance of getting lung cancer.

The good things about quitting

Quitting smoking can:

- Lower your blood pressure
- Improve your sense of smell and taste
- Make your lungs work better
- Make you cough less and breathe easier.

Your body starts to fix itself right away. Depending on how much you smoked, you could start to feel better within a week of quitting.

Within a year of quitting, the chance of getting heart disease is cut in half.

By quitting, you protect people around you from the bad things in secondhand smoke. And you save money too.

It's never too late to quit the smokes. Even if you've had a go before, it's worth another try — just keep going!

What if I tried to quit before and it didn't work?

Lots of people have to try a few times to quit. Every time you try, you learn something new that can help next time. **You've just got to keep at quitting, until one day you give up for good.**

How tobacco affects how you look

Smoking can:

- Stain your fingers, tongue, and teeth yellow-brown
- Make your gums bad, make your teeth fall out, and give you bad breath
- Make your skin saggy and give you wrinkles early
- Make your hair look dull and not shiny.

How smoking affects your money

Smoking costs a lot of money. If you smoke one pack of cigarettes every day, you could spend more than \$15,000 each year on cigarettes. You can use the free online **Cost of Smoking Calculator** to see how much money you could save if you stopped smoking.

How to quit

There are heaps of ways to give up smoking for good. Often, using a few ways together works best:

- Ask your health worker, doctor or pharmacist for advice. They can talk to you about different choices, like medicines that can help with cravings and feeling restless.
- Call **Quitline** on **13 7848** for a yarn or a call back.
- Check **quit.org.au** for ways to quit and tips for dealing with how you feel.
- Try the **My QuitBuddy** app — it's free and helps you set your own goals and motivations to quit, track your progress, and see how much money you're saving.
- Share your quit story with a family member or friend you trust to give you support.
- Use nicotine patches, gums, or sprays to fight cravings and feeling bad when you stop.
- Cut down slowly — smoke fewer cigarettes until you stop totally.
- Go 'cold turkey' — use your own willpower to get through cravings and feeling bad.

For help and support:



health.gov.au/GiveUpForGood

