

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.

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.

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 coats your lungs, and the chemicals in smoke can kill 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.





Australian Government

**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.

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 could save thousands of dollars a year on cigarettes.

You can use the free online [Cost of Smoking Calculator](https://quit.org.au/cost-of-smoking-calculator) from quit.org.au to see how much money you could save if you stopped smoking.

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 about using vapes to quit smoking?

Therapeutic vapes can be purchased from chemists under the guidance of a health professional.

They should only be considered if you have been unable to quit smoking using other treatment options — like nicotine replacement therapy (NRT).

Therapeutic vapes are different to those sold illegally by other retailers or online as they are required to meet product standards to reduce certain risks associated with the use of vapes.

Using vapes without clinical guidance is not recommended as they are harmful to your health and may not be an effective way for you to quit.

How to quit

There are heaps of ways to give up smoking for good and lots of support to help you if you need it. Often, using a few of these together works best.

Ways to quit:

- Cut down slowly — smoke fewer cigarettes until you stop totally.
- Go 'cold turkey' — stop smoking straight away and use your own willpower to get through cravings and feeling bad.
- Use nicotine replacement therapy (NRT), such as patches, gums, or sprays, to fight cravings and feeling bad when you stop smoking.
- **You may find it helpful to:**
 - 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 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. There is also a range of distractions to help you resist any cravings as you quit.
- Share your quit story with a family member or friend you trust to give you support.

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.**

Can other nicotine products help you quit?

There is no strong research supporting the use of other nicotine products, like pouches, to help you quit smoking. There is evidence that they may be harmful to your health and keep you hooked on nicotine.

There are safe and effective products, such as NRT, to help you quit. Talk to your health worker, doctor or chemist to find what works for you.

For help and support:



health.gov.au/GiveUpForGood

