

Smoking

It is no secret that smoking is bad for your health. Smoking hurts your lungs and your heart. It lowers the amount of oxygen that gets to your organs, raises your bad cholesterol, and raises your blood pressure. All of these can raise your risk of heart attack or stroke.

If you don't smoke, that's great. Make a plan to never start.

If you do smoke, there is something you can do: challenge yourself to quit smoking. Here are some steps to help you do it.

Step one: Realize the benefits of quitting

Quitting helps your heart and lungs—and it lowers the risk of hurting your blood vessels, eyes, nerves, and other organs. And quitting smoking can leave you with fewer wrinkles on your face; better-smelling hair, breath, and clothes; and less exposure for your family to secondhand smoke.

Step Two: Prepare to quit

Quitting is hard work, so approach it like any major project. Before you quit:

- Set a quit date, and tell your friends and family. Make this a time when your life is fairly calm and stress levels are low.
- Think of your reasons for quitting, and write them down. Put the list where you'll see it every day.
- Throw away your cigarettes, matches, lighters, and ashtrays.
- Ask others for their help and understanding. Ask a friend who smokes to consider quitting with you.

Step Three: Choose a quitting strategy

- Go cold turkey. Quitting all at once works for some people.
- Taper off. Quit smoking gradually by cutting back over several weeks.
- Use a nicotine patch, gum, inhaler, or spray. Or ask your doctor for a prescription medicine.
- Ask your doctor about counseling, acupuncture, or hypnosis.

You can use one of these steps or a combination of them. When you do, you'll feel healthier right away, and you'll be healthier for the rest of your life.

[Learn more](#) about type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

Source: <http://www.diabetes.org/diabetes-basics/prevention/checkup-america/smoking.html>