

A photograph of a pregnant woman with long brown hair, smiling and looking down at her belly. A young girl with brown hair in a ponytail, wearing a pink shirt, is looking up at the woman. The background is bright and out of focus.

# Becoming Tobacco-Free

Quitting tobacco as part of your recovery from other substances is one of the best gifts you can give yourself and those you care about.



Quitting tobacco while in treatment for other substances may make you more successful at quitting both.

## Why Become Tobacco-Free Now?

- ✓ Many people in treatment for substance use disorders use tobacco, want to quit, and do quit.
- ✓ Quitting tobacco improves your health and increases your chances of long-term recovery.
- ✓ If you are pregnant or have children, quitting can help them be safer and healthier.
- ✓ There is support available to help you quit for good, including medications that may be right for you.
- ✓ Many treatment centers and housing communities are going tobacco-free.

# Benefits of Being Tobacco-Free

Quitting tobacco is one of the best things you can do for your health.

Some benefits of quitting tobacco include:



Improving your  
heart and lung health



Reducing your risk  
of cancer



Protecting  
bone health



Reducing the risk  
of painful and  
irregular periods



Improving your  
mood and decreasing  
your anxiety



Increasing chance of  
long-term recovery  
from drugs and alcohol



Quitting all tobacco,  
including e-cigarettes, will  
help you be healthier.



Quitting tobacco increases your chances of having a healthy baby and healthy children.

# Benefits of Quitting if You are Pregnant

Quitting tobacco during your pregnancy will improve your baby's chances of being born healthy. Quitting tobacco:



Promotes healthier brain development



Lowers risk of miscarriage & stillbirth



Lowers risk of being born too early (before 37 weeks)



Decreases risk of Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)



Lowers risk of being born too small (5½ pounds or less)



Lowers risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related death



Promotes health later in life, like lower risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, and future nicotine addiction

# Benefits of Quitting for Your Children



Fewer coughs, colds,  
and ear infections



Better lung development  
and lower risk of asthma



Healthier brain  
development



Lower risk of  
Sudden Infant Death  
Syndrome (SIDS)  
and other sleep-  
related death



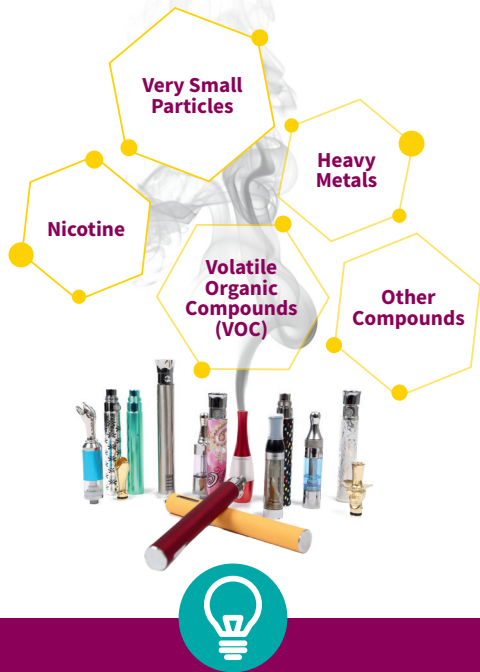
Promotes health later  
in life like lower risk of  
obesity, cancer, attention  
disorders, cardiovascular  
disease, and diabetes



Less likely to use  
tobacco when they  
are older



Quitting tobacco helps  
your child breathe better  
and have better health.



## What About Vaping or E-cigarettes?

✗ E-cigarettes contain nicotine.

Nicotine makes tobacco products addictive. It is bad for your heart, lungs, reproductive system, and may increase the risk of cancer. Even e-liquids that are labeled “nicotine-free” often contain some nicotine, along with other chemicals and particles.

✗ E-cigarette “vapor” is not harmless.

E-cigarette aerosol has been marketed as harmless water vapor, but it is not water vapor. It contains

nicotine, heavy metals, very small particles, and other chemicals that are not healthy to breathe.

✗ E-cigarettes don’t help most people quit smoking.

Many people who try using e-cigarettes to quit smoking end up using both e-cigarettes and regular cigarettes. There are other methods and medications for quitting that are proven to work.

✗ E-cigarette users do not get less nicotine than cigarette smokers.

Some people say they use e-cigarettes to help cut down on nicotine. But people who use e-cigarettes often have the same amount of nicotine in their blood as those who smoke cigarettes.

Vaping is not safe for you or those around you.

# Quitting Tobacco Facts

- ✓ You will start to breathe easier in 2-3 weeks.
- ✓ Some people report withdrawal symptoms – others do not. Everyone is different.
- ✓ Tobacco cravings last only 3-5 minutes and occur less often after the first 7-10 days.
- ✓ Quitting may be easier if you stay away from people who use tobacco.
- ✓ People often believe using tobacco will relieve anxiety. In fact, feelings of anxiety or stress are nicotine withdrawal symptoms.

## Nicotine Craving Cycle





Ask others not to  
smoke or vape around you  
or your children.

## Secondhand Smoke/Vape Facts

- ✓ Secondhand tobacco is the smoke/vape a tobacco-user breathes out or that comes out from the end of their cigarette, pipe, cigar, or e-cigarettes.
- ✓ Secondhand tobacco affects the health of others, including a developing fetus even when their mothers do not smoke/vape.
- ✓ Secondhand smoke contains about 4,000 chemicals – more than 50 are known to cause cancer.
- ✓ Secondhand e-cigarette aerosol is harmful and exposure should be avoided, especially by pregnant women, infants, children, and adolescents.
- ✓ There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand tobacco.



# Thirdhand Smoke/Vape Facts

The gases and small particles from smoke and vape aerosol that land on surfaces are called thirdhand smoke/vape.

- ✓ These small particles and nicotine stick to floors, walls, clothing, carpeting and furniture, skin, and many other surfaces.
- ✓ Thirdhand smoke contains more than 250 chemicals.
- ✓ When the chemicals in smoke and vape land on surfaces, they can react with other chemicals to create new and dangerous substances.
- ✓ Thirdhand tobacco is especially dangerous for babies and young children because they breathe in the chemicals, and they also get them on their skin when they crawl on floors, sit in cars, or are held by adults.
- ✓ There is no safe level of exposure to thirdhand tobacco.



Thirdhand smoke/vape is present in homes and cars where people have smoked or vaped, even if you can't smell it.



Tobacco users may or may not have withdrawal symptoms. Remember they are signs that your body is healing.

# Possible Withdrawal Symptoms

**Cough** Smoking stops the hair-like cilia in your airways that sweep out and keep your lungs clean. Quitting causes a temporary cough as your lungs heal.

**Strong Urge to Use Tobacco** Your body is withdrawing from nicotine, a highly addictive drug. You need time to change habits and learn to handle situations that make you want to use tobacco. Each time you resist an urge, it becomes easier to resist the next urge.

**Nervousness and Tension** Withdrawal from nicotine can cause you to feel nervous and tense. This will

get better 1-2 weeks after quitting. Cut down on caffeine and drink more water in the first few days to help flush the nicotine from your system.

**Lack of Concentration or Dizziness** After you quit, the brain gets more oxygen instead of poisonous carbon monoxide gas. Your brain also releases less adrenaline. These are both healthier for you.

**Slight Sore Throat** Tobacco smoke irritates and numbs the throat. You may have a slight sore throat as the numbness wears off and the throat heals.

Talk to your healthcare provider about medications that might be right for you to help relieve withdrawal symptoms.

## Worried About Weight?

Some people gain weight when they quit tobacco and their appetite returns. Try eating healthy foods, being active, and drinking plenty of water. Quitting tobacco is the best thing you can do for your health and can lead to healthier habits in other ways too!

# Your Plan to Be Tobacco-Free

## 6 Steps to Quit

### Step 1: Thinking about the Pros and Cons of Tobacco

What is good about using tobacco? What do you enjoy about it?

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What is not so good about using tobacco?

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What makes it hard for you to quit? What worries you about quitting?

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What would be good about being tobacco-free?

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Why do you want to quit now?

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Most successful  
ex-tobacco users made  
plans to help them stop.  
Having a plan prepares you  
to deal with the changes  
and stressful times  
when you quit.



It is important to  
create new tobacco-free  
habits to help you quit.

## Step 2: When and where do you use tobacco?:

## Step 3: Change your habits.

If you use tobacco  
when you:

Try doing this:

When you first  
wake up



Brush your teeth right away, or drink water  
or orange juice

Finish a meal



Get right up, take a walk,  
or go to another room

Watch TV



Do something else with your hands like  
draw, doodle, play cards, or string beads

Instead of using tobacco when I:

I can try doing:



## Step 4: Use tobacco substitutes

### For your mouth

Fresh fruits

Chewing gum

Straw or toothpick

Raw vegetables

Nuts with shells

Hard candy or mints

### For your hands

Knit, sew, or string beads

Play a game or text

Hold a small toy or fidget

Draw or doodle

Squeeze a stress ball

Do a crossword puzzle

List 3 tobacco substitutes you would like to try:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Step 5: Think about secondhand smoke and vape.

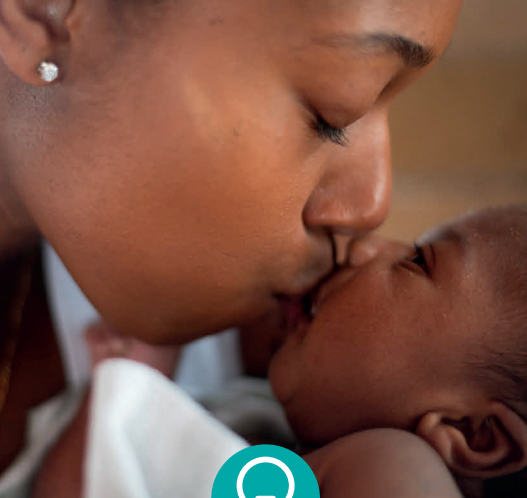
List 3 ways to avoid secondhand smoke and vape:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



When you have the urge to  
use tobacco or vape:

Delay  
Deep breathe  
Drink water  
Do something else



Understanding your  
feelings about tobacco  
can help you quit.

## Step 6: Think about your life without tobacco.

What would be good about living tobacco-free?

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How will life be different in 6 months without tobacco?

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## Set a Quit Date!



**I am ready!**  
My quit date is:



MONTH

DAY

YEAR

# Resources



**Your healthcare provider**



**Your substance use counselor and support group**



**Your county health department**



**For more information on being tobacco-free:**

- ✓ [YouQuitTwoQuit.org](https://YouQuitTwoQuit.org)
- ✓ [SmokeFree.gov](https://SmokeFree.gov)
- ✓ [BecomeAnEx.org](https://BecomeAnEx.org)



**Free Quit Coaching from QuitlineNC**

**1-800-QUIT-NOW  
(1-800-784-8669)**

QuitlineNC can double your chances of quitting for good. Trained Quit Coaches can help you quit and stay tobacco free. QuitlineNC is free, confidential, and available 24/7.



**Get support from family, friends, your health care provider, and quit counselors to stay tobacco-free.**



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**



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