

Nicotine

Nicotine is a highly addictive drug found in tobacco. It is just as addictive as heroin or cocaine. Over time, a person who smokes becomes physically and psychologically dependent on nicotine.

Nicotine produces a pleasurable feeling that causes the user to smoke more. As the nervous system adapts to nicotine, smokers tend to increase the number of cigarettes they smoke. After awhile, the smoker develops a tolerance to the drug, which leads to an increase in smoking to maintain this level of nicotine.

When smoke is inhaled, nicotine is carried deep into the lungs where it is absorbed quickly into the bloodstream and carried to the heart, brain, liver, and spleen. Nicotine affects many parts of the body, including the heart and blood vessels, the hormonal system, the body's metabolism and the brain.

Cravings for nicotine increase cravings for other drugs.¹

Where you can go for additional help

**NYS OASAS Tobacco Independence:
Freedom from a Deadly Addiction**
518-485-1768 • www.oasas.state.ny.us

New York State Smokers Quitline
1-866-697-8487 • www.nysmokefree.com

American Cancer Society
1-800-ACS-2345 • www.cancer.org

American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists
1-800-673-8444 • www.acog.org

American Heart Association
1-800-242-8721 • www.americanheart.org

American Lung Association
1-800-586-4872 • www.lungusa.org

Regardless of age, patients in treatment for drug addiction will live longer if they quit⁵

Tobacco Independence:
Freedom from a deadly addiction

 **OASAS** NEW YORK STATE
OFFICE OF ALCOHOLISM & SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES
Improving Lives. Addiction Services for Prevention, Treatment, Recovery

www.oasas.state.ny.us
1450 Western Avenue • Albany, NY 12203
518.473.3460 • f. 518.485.6014

David A. Paterson, Governor • Karen M. Carpenter-Palumbo, Commissioner

Tobacco Independence:
Freedom from a deadly addiction

New York State Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services

Tobacco Independence:

-  Better health
-  More energy
-  More money
-  More control over your life
-  A new start

Freedom from a deadly addiction

Why Quit?

Health concerns are usually at the top of the list. It not only harms your health, but also the health of those around you. Nearly everyone knows that smoking can cause lung cancer, but did you know it is also a risk factor for cancer of the mouth, voice box, bladder, kidney, pancreas, cervix, stomach and leukemia? Smoking also causes serious respiratory diseases such as emphysema and chronic bronchitis. Additionally, smokers have twice the risk of dying from a heart attack as nonsmokers.

Women over 35 who smoke and use the birth control pill are in a high-risk group for heart attack, stroke and blood clots of the legs. Women who are pregnant and smoke are more likely to have a miscarriage or low birth-weight baby.

No matter what your age or how long you've smoked, quitting will help you live longer. Ex-smokers also enjoy a better quality of life with fewer illnesses from cold and flu viruses.

In addition to harming your health, smoking can damage your appearance with:

- premature wrinkling of the skin
- bad breath
- stained teeth
- gum disease
- bad smelling clothes and hair
- yellow fingernails

Special Concerns

Weight Gain – Many smokers gain some weight when they quit, however it is usually less than 10 pounds. For some this can lead to a decision not to quit, but the weight gain is generally very small and it is much more dangerous to continue smoking

Tobacco negatively impacts recovery rates from other substances³

Tobacco use causes more deaths each year than alcohol, heroin, cocaine, HIV, homicides, suicides, fires and accidents – combined.²

After quitting, you will notice some immediate improvements that will enhance your day-to-day life:

- Food tastes better.
- Sense of smell returns to normal.
- Normal activities no longer leave you out-of-breath (stairs, light housework).
- Increased spending money – smoking is expensive, around \$3,000 annually for the average smoker (1.5 to 2 packs per day).
- Social acceptance – most places have restrictions on smoking and finding a place to smoke can be a hassle.
- Some employers prefer to hire nonsmokers because smoking employees cost businesses more in sick days and insurance benefits.
- Friends may not want you smoking in their homes or cars.
- Landlords may choose not to rent to smokers.
- Dating may be limited to only other smokers, who make up only about one-quarter of the population.

than it is to gain a small amount of weight. Focus on ways to stay healthy, such as eating plenty of fruits and vegetables, drinking plenty of water and getting enough sleep and regular exercise.

Stress – Because many smokers use nicotine to help cope with stress, when quitting, new ways of handling stress must be learned. Exercise is a good stress reducer. There are also stress-management classes and self help books. Prayer, meditation, and breathing exercises have also been successful.

Methods of Quitting

It is hard to fight any addiction and smoking is no different. But you can quit! More than 40 million Americans have.

For most people, the best way to quit is a combination of nicotine replacement therapy, emotional support and a method to change personal habits. Studies show that pairing nicotine replacement with a program that helps to change behavior can double the number of smokers who successfully quit.

Nicotine Replacement Therapies – About two-thirds of those who attempt to quit are not successful on the first try. This is often related to the onset of withdrawal symptoms such as depression, feelings of frustration and anger and irritability. Nicotine replacement reduces a smoker's withdrawal symptoms, allowing them to deal with the psychological aspects of quitting smoking. By reducing these symptoms, smokers have a better chance of being successful.

Replacement therapies come in a variety of forms: patches, gum, lozenges, inhalers, nasal sprays or oral medicine. They offer several advantages:

- It is a cleaner form of nicotine, avoiding the thousands of poisons and tar that are found in burning tobacco.
- Delivers a lower dose of nicotine.
- Reduces withdrawal symptoms, allowing the smoker to focus on the psychological aspects of quitting.

In New York State, telephone counseling is available. These counselors can recommend ways to stop smoking and tell you where you can go for help. This service can also provide nicotine patches. Call the New York State Smokers Quitline at **1-866-697-8487**.

Smoking cessation reduces the risk of relapse⁴

¹Taylor et al, 2000

²Center for Disease Control and Prevention - Annual Smoking-Attributable Mortality, Years of Potential Life Lost, and Productivity Losses-United States, 1997-2001

³Elizabeth Stuti, M.D., In the American Journal on Addictions

⁴Sobell, et al., 1995

⁵Taylor DHJ, Hasselblad V., Henly SJ, Thun MJ, Sloan FA, Benefits of Smoking Cessation for Longevity. Am J of Public Health. 2002;92;990-996