



Be Tobacco Free



Did you know that quitting tobacco is the single most important thing you can do to improve your health and protect the health of your family members? If you quit smoking or using other forms of tobacco, you and your family will experience health benefits in the short- and long-term. It's never too late to quit.

What harm does tobacco use cause?

- All forms of tobacco use are harmful. This includes cigarettes, cigars, pipes, snuff, snus, chewing tobacco and all other tobacco products.
- In fact, tobacco and secondhand smoke kill approximately 443,000 people in the U.S. each year. It is the largest cause of preventable illness and death in the U.S.
- Tobacco use causes cancers, heart disease, stroke, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). If you are pregnant, tobacco use can cause complications of pregnancy.

What is secondhand smoke and why is it a problem?

- Secondhand smoke is the smoke released from the burning end of a cigarette, cigar or pipe, and the smoke exhaled by the smoker.
- There is no safe level of secondhand smoke.
- Nonsmokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke at home or work are 20% to 30% more likely to develop heart disease or lung cancer.
- In babies and children, secondhand smoke is associated with sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), acute lung infections, ear problems, and more frequent and severe asthma attacks.
- If you already have heart disease, you are at especially high risk when you breathe secondhand smoke. It can have immediate harmful effects on your health and can increase the risk of heart attack.

What are the benefits of quitting smoking?

- Many good things happen as soon as you quit. You can feel good about protecting your health by quitting and protecting your family and friends from secondhand smoke.

A Better Way to
LIVE

*Talk with your
health care team
about your goals.*



- You will have more energy and breathe easier. And you will discover that food smells and tastes better since you quit.
- You will save money that you can spend on other things, like a vacation.
- You will notice that your clothes, car, and home smell better.
- You will look and feel better. You will have fewer wrinkles, and no stains on your skin and nails.

What are the benefits to my baby if I quit smoking while pregnant?

- Your baby will be healthier and will get more oxygen.
- Your baby will be less likely to be born too soon.
- Your baby will be more likely to come home from the hospital on the same day that you come home.
- Your baby will have fewer asthma and wheezing problems.

How do I get help with quitting tobacco?

- Talk with your VA health care team about help with quitting tobacco. Your team can help you in several different ways which might include:
 - Medications and tips for quitting, such as setting a date, seeking support, and removing all smoking-related things from your home.
 - Meeting with an expert on the team, such as the Health Behavior Coordinator, for support in quitting.
 - Joining a class with other Veterans who are also quitting, led by the hospital's expert in smoking cessation.
- Make use of the QuitLine, the SmokefreeVET text messaging system or the Stay Quit Coach mobile app developed for Veterans.
- Tobacco Cessation Quit Line for Veterans: [1-855-QUIT VET \(1-855-784-8838\)](tel:1-855-QUIT-VET)
- SmokefreeVET: A mobile text message smoking cessation service. Text the word VET to 47848 from your mobile phone or visit: www.Smokefree.gov/VET
- Stay Quit Coach: a free mobile app to support quitting smoking and staying quit.

If you have questions about how to make healthy living changes, please talk with your health care team.

FOR THE MOST CURRENT INFORMATION AND OTHER RESOURCES:

- VHA National Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention: www.prevention.va.gov
- VHA Tobacco & Health: Policy and Programs, Clinical Public Health smoking cessation resources: www.publichealth.va.gov/smoking
- Veterans Health Library: www.veteranshealthlibrary.org