

Quit Smoking

If you're a smoker, quitting smoking is the most important step you can take to protect your lungs. It is NEVER too late to quit. Your doctor can help you decide which smoking cessation method will work best for you.

Why should I quit smoking?

You've probably heard how smoking can be harmful to your health and the health of those around you. Here are some ways quitting can be helpful. If you quit, you will:

1. Prolong your life.
2. Improve your health. Smoking increases your risk of lung cancer, throat cancer, a lung disease called emphysema, heart disease, high blood pressure, ulcers, gum disease, and other conditions.
3. Feel healthier. Smoking can cause coughing, poor athletic ability, and sore throats.
4. Look better. Smoking can cause face wrinkles, stained teeth, and dull skin.
5. Improve your sense of taste and smell.
6. Save money.

How can I quit smoking?

There's no one way to quit smoking that works for everyone. A smoking cessation program may be helpful to you. Ask your doctor about smoking cessation programs in your community. As a board certified Clinical Hypnotherapist, I know that hypnosis can be extremely successful for most clients. Some things that will help you ease the process are:

1. Pick a date to stop smoking, and then get ready for it.

2. Record when and why you smoke. You will come to know what triggers you to smoke.
3. Record what you do when you smoke. Try smoking at different times and different places to break the connections between smoking and certain activities.
4. List your reasons for quitting. Read over the list before and after you quit.
5. Find activities to replace smoking. Be ready to do something else when you want to smoke.
6. Ask yourself, "What do I do when I quit smoking?"

What happens when I quit smoking?

After 20 minutes of not smoking:

1. You stop polluting the air.
2. Your blood pressure and pulse decrease.
3. The temperature of your hands and feet increases.

After 8 hours of not smoking:

1. The carbon monoxide level in your blood returns to normal.
2. Oxygen levels in your blood increase

After 24 hours of not smoking:

1. Your chance of heart attack decreases

After 48 hours of not smoking:

1. Your nerve endings adjust to the absence of nicotine
2. Your ability to taste and smell begins to return

After 72 hours of not smoking:

1. Bronchial tubes relax

After 2 weeks to 3 months of not smoking:

1. Your circulation improves
2. Your exercise tolerance improves

After 1-9 months of not smoking:

1. Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, and shortness of breath decrease
2. Cilia in the lungs regrow, increasing the ability of the lungs to handle mucus, clean the lungs, and reduce infection
3. Your overall energy level increases

After 1 year of not smoking:

1. Your risk of dying from heart disease decreases to half that of a lifelong smoker's risk
2. After 5 years of not smoking:
 3. Your risk of dying from lung cancer decreases to half that of a lifelong smoker's risk

After 10 years of not smoking

3. Your risk of dying from lung cancer drops to almost the same rate as a lifelong NON-smoker
2. Your risk of other cancers -- of the mouth, larynx, esophagus, bladder, kidney, and pancreas -- decreases

I've tried quitting before, but it didn't work. Why not?

To quit smoking, you must be ready emotionally and mentally. Some people are more ready to quit than others. Look at these five stages of change that people go through to successfully quit smoking.

Stage One: Pre-contemplation. You don't want to quit smoking, but you may try to quit because you feel pressured to quit.

Stage Two: Contemplation. You want to quit someday. You haven't taken steps to quit, but you want to quit.

Stage Three: Preparation. You take small steps to quit such as cutting back on smoking or switching to a lighter brand.

Stage Four: Action. You put a plan for quitting into action. You make changes in your actions and environment to help cope with urges to smoke. You cope with urges to smoke by following the plan and remain smoke-free for six months.

Stage Five: Maintenance. You have not smoked for one year.