

Quitting Smoking

What is it?

Smoking is the greatest cause of preventable illness and death in Australia. Around two-thirds of long-term smokers die ahead of their time because they smoke. There are more than 7,000 different chemical compounds in tobacco smoke. Seventy of those compounds are known to cause cancer. If you smoke, now's the time to quit. If you've already tried to quit once, don't despair. Quitting is not easy, and many people need to try a few times before they can quit completely. Your GP is in the best position to help you work out your next steps.

What will my GP do now?

Your GP will give you information and resources to help you learn how to quit. You will be asked to tell your GP about how often you smoke and how you feel about quitting. Your GP will help you make a plan for quitting and will talk to you about:

- What to expect when you quit
- Managing cravings
- Physical symptoms
- Medications
- Relapses
- Strategies – cold turkey or medication
- Risks of medications
- E-cigarettes
- Barriers to quitting – social pressure, etc
- Behaviour change strategies

Medications

Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) is a medication that help to manage cigarette cravings. NRT contains nicotine, the addictive substance in tobacco. However, NRT doesn't contain other toxic substances and is not addictive. NRT can be used as a patch or oral medication. It is also approved for pregnancy.

E-cigarettes

E-cigarettes are promoted as a 'healthier' option because they provide nicotine without other side effects of regular cigarettes. However, the quality and safety of e-cigarettes has not been proven.

What will my GP do in the future?

Your GP will see you regularly to check in and monitor your treatment plan. You'll discuss your progress and consider if you need to change your plan. Your GP might refer you to a counsellor if you're having trouble quitting. Regular contact with your GP will increase your chances of quitting successfully, so continue to make follow-up appointments.

Benefits of Quitting

- 12 hours** Almost all the nicotine is out of your body
- 24 hours** Blood levels of carbon monoxide have dropped dramatically
- 1 week** Breathing is easier if you have COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) and you regain sense of taste and smell
- 6 weeks** The risk of wound infection after surgery is reduced
- 1 year** The risk of heart disease is halved compared to someone who smokes
- 10 years** The risk of lung cancer is 50% less than someone who smokes
- 15 years** The risk of heart disease and death are almost the same as someone who never smoked

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What questions could I ask my doctor?

- How long does it take to quit?
- What can I expect when I try?
- What happens if I can't quit?
- Who can I call if I have a question?
- What if people at my home smoke?
- How can I succeed?
- What medications are available?
- Where can I learn more about quitting?



What can I do?

To quit smoking, you need to want to quit. If you're not feeling ready to quit, consider why. Talk to your GP about how you can address the fears that are holding you back. Read about the risks and health benefits of smoking. Learn why it's so important to quit. Consider taking up a new hobby, such as exercise or an activity, to take your mind off smoking. Quitting smoking will help to increase your fitness level and make exercise enjoyable again.

Follow your quit plan. Talk to your GP if your plan is too hard to manage. Ask your GP for a referral for a counsellor if you're struggling to quit. Ask your GP about tools, apps and services for quitting.

Avoid people who smoke for a while. Avoid situations where you may crave a cigarette, like pubs and nightclubs. Remember that relapse is common. It may take a few goes before you quit completely, but with support and a plan you can quit for life.

What supports are available?

Quit for New Life Program

A best practice smoking cessation program for women having an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander baby. Provides culturally appropriate smoking cessation support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pregnant women and their household members who smoke, including advice, behavioural strategies, referral to Quitline, up to 12 weeks free NRT, and extended follow-up support. Ask your GP for a referral.

Where can I learn more?

- **Cancer Institute of NSW:** icanquit.com.au
- **NSW Health:** health.nsw.gov.au
 - Practical Advice on Quitting
 - How to Protect Your Baby From Passive Smoke
 - Staying Smoke-free During Pregnancy and Beyond
 - Why Your Baby Needs You to Quit Smoking
- **Quit Coach:** quitcoach.org.au
- **Department of Health - How to quit smoking:** health.gov.au
- **Quitline:** health.gov.au

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory factsheets are endorsed by South Western Sydney PHN's Community Advisory Committee and local GPs

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