



GOING TOBACCO-FREE SO YOUR HEART BREATHES EASIER

Smoking is a risk factor for many health problems, including the oft-mentioned lung cancer, and your heart is not immune. In fact, smoking has an immediate impact on your cardiovascular system.

Your blood pressure increases and your ability to exercise decreases when you smoke. Smoking also increases your chance of blood clots, which can cause heart attacks and strokes.

And it's not just your heart that's at risk. There's no such thing as a safe way to smoke around others. The health risks of smoking float right across the room and impact everyone around you. **The American Heart Association reports that tens of thousands of cardiovascular disease deaths are caused by secondhand smoke each year.**



Heart Disease Risk: Chew On It

Smoking and secondhand smoke aren't the only problems. Smokeless tobacco options, including chewing, contain a host of dangerous compounds—plus nicotine, which keeps you

addicted.

Smokeless tobacco is associated with increased blood pressure and higher heart rates. Research also suggests that, if you do have a heart attack, **your chances of dying are higher if you use smokeless tobacco.**

Tips to Quit

Smoking and chewing cessation is hard work—or a lot more people would do it. But you CAN do it. Here are some things that have helped others:

- **Start big:** Plan your Quit Day and mark it in big letters on your calendar. Make a list of why you want to quit—and don't forget your heart! Get your teeth and clothes cleaned, so you can see and smell that you're ready for a fresh start.
- **Think about it:** As you approach your Quit Day, pay close attention to why you pick up a cigarette or chew. Are you tired? stressed? celebrating? Start to strategize other, healthier ways to handle the feelings or events that cause you to reach for tobacco.
- **Practice and make perfect:** Try skipping your usual smoke or chew for a few hours. Practice replacing that cigarette with a healthier option like sugarless gum or exercise.
- **Make a clean sweep:** On your Quit Day, get rid of everything associated with your tobacco use. Cigarettes and chew? Gone. Ashtrays? In the trash. Don't keep a secret stash just in case!
- **Support your body:** Your body is going through a major change, so be kind to it. Get regular exercise and make sure you're getting enough sleep—about seven to nine hours for most people. Load your plate with fresh fruit and vegetables, and don't forget to drink eight to 10 glass of water each day.



Let Your Heart Lean on Others

You don't have to go on your quit journey alone. Ask for your friends and family for their commitment and support. Your health care provider may be able to provide additional help through support and medication.

You'll also find support through a smoking/tobacco cessation group. **A free group meets every Monday at Adventist Medical Center in Portland, Oregon**, from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. You can also call the Oregon Quit Line, 1-800-QUIT-NOW, for assistance on your quit journey.

Tobacco is a big deal. It creates big risks to your health, but that means you will get big rewards when you quit. And your choice to live tobacco-free will improve health risks not just for you but everyone around you.

That's a choice full of heart and worth making.

Did you know that there is a link between tobacco use and mental health? Listen to our podcast below to learn more or [find it in iTunes](#).



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