

# Quitting Smoking During Pregnancy



You may have just learned you are pregnant, or you may be months along. Either way, it's not too late to make a change. Every cigarette you don't smoke is a benefit to you and your baby. Deciding not to smoke can be a tough choice, but you **can** change. Even if you've tried before, don't give up. Many smokers try quitting several times before they succeed.

Some people believe that e-cigarettes or hookahs or waterpipes are safer during pregnancy. But they both contain nicotine, just like regular cigarettes. They can also harm your baby. Discuss your use of these products with your healthcare provider.



## Babies born to people who smoke

Problems of babies born to pregnant people who smoke include:

- May be smaller than normal at birth or may be born early (premature or preterm)
- Are more likely to die of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome)
- May be cranky, restless, and get sick more often
- Are more likely to have learning and behavioral problems as they develop
- Are more likely to have childhood obesity
- Are more likely to have certain nervous system disorders, diabetes, and asthma

## Pick a way to quit

Ways to quit smoking include:

- **Getting support.** Support programs can be a big help, especially for heavy smokers. These groups offer lectures, ways to change behavior, and peer support. Talk with your healthcare provider to learn more.
- **Cold turkey.** Today you smoke, tomorrow you don't. This is rough at first. But changes take place quickly and withdrawal may be shorter. This works for some smokers, but it may not be the most successful way to stop smoking.
- **Tapering off.** Over time, cut back on the number of cigarettes you smoke each day. To do so, increase the amount of time between each smoke. Try not to inhale. Tapering may not work well because it reinforces the habit of smoking. Talk with your healthcare provider.

## Set a quit date

No matter which method you choose, pick a date to quit smoking entirely:

- Choose a date.
- After picking the day, mark it in bold letters on a calendar.

## Your quit list

Why do I want to quit? What are my triggers for wanting to smoke?

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Start by giving up cigarettes at the times you least need them. Write down a few more ideas. These might include writing down your triggers and staying away from them, joining a support group, keeping busy by finding new things to do, and rewarding yourself for your success.

## Set limits

Whether you decide to quit cold turkey or to taper off, setting limits can help you quit:

- Limit where you smoke. Pick one room or a porch, and smoke only in that place.
- Hang a list of "quit benefits" in the spot where you smoke. Put one on the refrigerator and one on your car dashboard.
- Join a stop-smoking group.

## For more information

Here are some resources to help you quit smoking:

- [smokefree.gov/talk-to-an-expert](https://smokefree.gov/talk-to-an-expert)
- [women.smokefree.gov](https://women.smokefree.gov)
- National Cancer Institute Smoking Quitline: 877-44U-QUIT (877-448-7848)

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