

# Smoking and Respiratory Diseases



## Fast facts

According to the CDC:

- More than 16 million Americans are living with a disease caused by smoking.
- Across the world, tobacco causes more than 7 million deaths per year.
- Smoking causes cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung diseases, diabetes, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). COPD includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis.
- On average, smokers die 10 years earlier than nonsmokers.

## Risks linked to smoking

Risks of lung diseases from smoking include:

- **Chronic bronchitis.** This is a type of COPD. This is a long-term (chronic) inflammation of the large airways (bronchi). It causes shortness of breath and coughing up mucus over weeks or months.
- **Emphysema.** This is also a type of COPD. This condition affects the air sacs (alveoli) in the lungs. It causes shortness of breath, coughing, and extreme tiredness (fatigue). It can also cause sleep and heart problems, weight loss, and depression.
- **Lung cancer.** This is an abnormal growth of cells. It can cause lumps, masses, or tumors to grow in the lungs. It may start in the lining of the bronchi. Or it may start in other parts of the lungs. Smoking is the leading cause of lung cancer. This includes secondhand smoke. Lung cancer often has no symptoms until it's advanced. Symptoms may include cough, chest pain, shortness of breath, and recurring lung infections.
- **Other types of cancer.** Smoking increases the risk of cancer of the nose, sinuses, voice box, and throat. It also raises the risk of many other cancers. These include cancers of the gastrointestinal, urinary, and female reproductive systems.

If you have any symptoms of lung disease, see your healthcare provider right away.

## Dangers of secondhand smoke

Secondhand smoke is smoke that is breathed out by smokers. It's also smoke from a burning cigarette, cigar, or pipe. It causes more than 7,000 lung cancer deaths each year in people who don't smoke. And it causes a total of 41,000 other deaths per year. It can also lead to lung conditions and heart disease. Symptoms linked to secondhand smoke may include:

- Eye, nose, and throat irritation
- Coughing
- Too much mucus in the airways
- Chest discomfort or pain

Children and babies exposed to tobacco smoke are more likely to have ear infections and asthma. They're also at a higher risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

## Cancer risks of cigar smoking

Many cigar smokers don't inhale. But their risk for oral, throat, and esophageal cancers is the same as for cigarette smokers.

Some cigar smokers do inhale. These smokers are more likely to have oral, esophageal, or laryngeal cancer than people who don't smoke.

Secondhand smoke from cigars gives off carcinogens. These are chemicals that cause cancer. Cigar smoke has more of these chemicals than cigarette smoke does.

## Benefits of quitting smoking

People who quit smoking can reverse some of the lung damage. Other benefits may include:

- Lower risk for lung disease
- Lower risk for heart disease
- Lower risk for cancer
- No more cigarette stains on fingers and teeth
- Less coughing and shortness of breath
- No more cigarette smoke smell on breath, clothing, and hair
- Better senses of smell and taste
- Healthier gums
- Saving money

## How can I quit smoking?

Quitting smoking can be very hard. These tips can help you quit:

- Think about why you want to quit. Make a list of the reasons.
- Set a quit date.
- Try to pick a time when you have as little stress as possible.
- Ask for support and encouragement from family, friends, and coworkers.
- If you don't already exercise, start to increase your physical activity. This can improve your health.
- Try to get enough sleep each night. And eat a healthy diet. Along with exercise, healthy sleeping and eating habits will help you cope with quitting.
- Join a program to help you stop smoking. Or join a support group. Most communities have these programs. .

## Helping you quit

There are proven treatments that can help you quit. Medicines can reduce nicotine cravings. They can also help you stop smoking. Combining medicines with counseling or behavioral therapy can increase your success at quitting. Talk with your healthcare provider to learn more.

Over-the-counter medicines include:

- **Nicotine patch.** Nicotine is sent through the skin.
- **Nicotine gum.** Gum gives your body nicotine quickly.
- **Nicotine lozenge.** This is like a hard candy.

Prescription medicines include:

- **Nicotine nasal spray.** This sends nicotine quickly into your body.
- **Nicotine inhaler.** Using an inhaler is like smoking cigarettes.
- **Bupropion.** This is a type of antidepressant medicine. It can help to lessen cravings for nicotine.
- **Varenicline tartrate.** It helps to lessen the discomfort of quitting. It also lessens the pleasure you get from smoking.

## Quit resources

For help with quitting:

- Contact the [American Lung Association at www.lung.org/quit-smoking](http://www.lung.org/quit-smoking) or 800-LUNGUSA (800-586-4872)
- Find tools and tips at [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov)
- Call 800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669)

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