

January's Topic: Quitting Tobacco

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My New Year's Resolution is to Quit Smoking!

At the beginning of each New Year, we think of ways to change our lives for the better. So if your New Year's resolution is to quit using tobacco, you are not alone. Quitting smoking is a common New Year's resolution for many Americans, but it's much easier said than done. Approximately six out of ten smokers require multiple quit attempts to stop smoking.¹ However, quitting smoking is not impossible. With guidance and support, many Americans are able to kick the smoking habit for good.

"The start of the New Year is a terrific time for smokers to implement their plan to quit. The benefits of a smoke-free lifestyle include improved overall health, economic benefits, and protecting loved ones from secondhand smoke."

– Dr. Norman Edelman, chief medical officer of the American Lung Association



Harmful Effects of Smoking on You and Others

- There are approximately 600 ingredients in cigarettes.^{2,3} When burned, the tobacco smoke contains a deadly mix of more than 7000 chemicals.² At least 70 of these chemicals are known to cause cancer, and many are toxic.^{2,3}
- Tobacco use is the leading known **preventable** cause of death.⁴
 - 1 out of every 5 deaths in the U.S. is a result of tobacco use. That is more than 480,000 deaths each year.
- Smoking causes many types of cancer, lung disease, heart disease, stroke, pregnancy complications, periodontal or gum disease, stomach and intestinal ulcers, and infertility and impotence (men).⁵
- Secondhand smoke is just as toxic as smoking itself.
 - Secondhand smoke exposure causes disease and premature death in children and adults who do not smoke.
 - Causes approximately 50,000 deaths per year.⁶
 - Harmful effects on children include:
 - Responsible for increased respiratory infections in children resulting in higher hospitalization rates.
 - Causes 430 sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) deaths in US annually
 - There is **no risk-free** level of exposure for secondhand smoke.

Why are cigarettes so addictive?

- **NICOTINE** – produces dependence in most tobacco users and may be as addictive as heroin or cocaine.

How is smokeless tobacco different from smoking tobacco?

- Smokeless tobacco contains more nicotine than cigarettes and very high levels of cancer-causing agents. It is **not a safer alternative** to cigarettes, and is linked to causing oral and gastrointestinal cancers, gum disease, rotted teeth and tooth loss, and bad breath.

What about electronic cigarettes, can those help me quit?

- E-cigarettes have gained in popularity in recent years with the enforcement of smoking bans. Marketers claim that it's a safer way to smoke and that it can even help you quit. However, there are no studies to show their effectiveness to help people quit, and there are concerns about their safety. The FDA has even issued a warning about potential health risks.

Benefits of Quitting Smoking⁷

Within 20 minutes of smoking your last cigarette, your body begins a series of changes that continues for years.

- **20 minutes after quitting:** Your heart rate and blood pressure drop
- **12 hours after quitting:** Carbon monoxide level in blood drops to normal
- **24 hours after quitting:** Chance of heart attack decreases
- **5 days after quitting:** Most nicotine is out of your body
- **1 week after quitting:** Your sense of taste and smell improves
- **2 weeks to 3 months after quitting:** Your circulation improves and lung function increases
- **1 to 9 months after quitting:** Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, and shortness of breath decrease. Increased ability to prevent lung infections
- **1 year after quitting:** Excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's. A pack-a-day smoker will save over \$4,000
- **5 years after quitting:** Stroke and cancer risk is reduced
- **10 years after quitting:** The risk of dying from lung cancer is halved
- **15 years after quitting:** The risk of coronary heart disease is that of a non-smokers

Why is Quitting Tobacco So Hard?

Many ex-smokers say quitting was the hardest thing they ever did.⁴

- An **important first step to quitting** is learning why you feel the need to smoke.⁴
 - Once you know why, you can better prepare yourself to find the best ways to quit.
- Nicotine Withdrawal⁴
 - When you stop smoking, your body has to adjust to no longer having nicotine in its system. For most people, the worst of the symptoms only lasts a few days to a couple of weeks. Some of the most common symptoms of withdrawal are depression, trouble sleeping, irritability, trouble thinking clearly and concentrating, restlessness, and feeling more hungry. There are medications that can help with the withdrawal symptoms.
- Triggers and Cravings⁴
 - There are going to be people, places, things, and situations that may trigger your urge to smoke.
 - You won't be able to avoid all smoking triggers, so it's important to make a plan ahead of time for how to handle those cravings.

Ways to Help You Quit Tobacco for Good

Make A Quit Plan

- **Why use a quit plan?**
 - It will help you keep focused, confident, and motivated to quit smoking. It lets you identify challenges you may face and ways to overcome them.
- **Steps to help you create your own quit plan⁴:**
 1. **Pick a Quit Date**
 - Choose a date within 2 weeks to quit
 2. **Inform family and friends that you are quitting**
 - Quitting is easier with support from important people in your life
 3. **Remove any smoking reminders**
 - Get rid of your cigarettes, matches, ashtrays, and lighters. Make things clean and fresh at work, in your car, and at home.
 4. **Identify your reasons to quit smoking**
 - Make a list and keep it in a place where you can see it every day for motivation.
 5. **Identify your smoking triggers**
 - Try to anticipate these triggers and develop ways to deal with them.
 6. **Develop ways to cope with nicotine withdrawal before you quit**
 - There are 7 medications approved to help you quit. Nicotine patches, gums, and lozenges are available over-the-counter, and the nasal spray and inhaler are prescription. Bupropion SR (Zyban[®]) and varenicline (Chantix[®]) are non-nicotine prescription medications.
 7. **Have places you can turn to for immediate help**
 - Counseling and support help lines are available.
 8. **Set up rewards for milestones**
 - Quitting smoking is hard, so be proud of your accomplishments.

Support Services

- **Alabama Tobacco Quitline**
 - 1-800-QUITNOW (1-800-784-8669)
 - www.QuitNowAlabama.com
 - **FREE** telephone and online coaching service for anyone who is ready to quit tobacco.
 - The Alabama Tobacco Quitline offers:
 - Up to 5 scheduled coaching calls with a trained tobacco cessation coach
 - Free nicotine replacement patches for qualified participants
 - Live online chat with a coach
 - Email, text message, and mobile application support
 - Open every day from 6am to midnight
- **SWC Smoking Cessation Clinic**
 - **FREE** clinic service that offers counseling to help you quit smoking
 - Offers personalized recommendations for smoking cessation medication therapy
- Counseling and medication are both effective for treating tobacco dependence, and using them together is **more effective** than using either one alone.

References

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SEIB and Local Government employees along with SEIB retirees are able to use the State Wellness Center Pharmacy. The pharmacy offers various over the counter products at discounted prices and a **free medication delivery service**. Delivery can be provided to the patients located in Montgomery. Please designate which site you would like your medication delivered to, and if it is to your residence someone must be available at the home to receive the delivery.

State Wellness Center Healthcare Clinic

The SEIB clinic has a quality healthcare **TEAM** that includes nurse practitioners, an ambulatory care pharmacist, a physician, and nurses who work closely together to take care of your health and wellness needs.

Services Include:

- Treat minor illnesses
- Provide health education & monitoring
- Check health progress between appointments
- Share information with your physician
- Monitor efficacy & safety of every medication
- Evaluate out of pocket medication expense
- Smoking cessation & weight loss services
- Diabetes education program
- Immunizations & injectable medications
- Develop a personalized medication plan
- Monitor control of chronic illnesses
- Medication check-ups
- Medication therapy management