

SMOKING CESSATION

According to the American Heart Association, about 48 million Americans smoke cigarettes, but most smokers are either actively trying to quit or want to quit. According to the 2000 Surgeon General's Report, tobacco smoking remains the No. 1 cause of preventable disease and death in the United States. In the United States, an estimated 25.1 million men (23.4 percent) and 20.9 million women (18.5 percent) are smokers. Since 1965, more than 40 percent of all adults who have ever smoked have quit. Smoking can cause multiple health problems. Not only does smoking affect the outside of your body such as your appearance, but it also affects the inside of your body. There are several resources and preventative measures to use when quitting smoking.

When you quit smoking it not only keeps you healthy and happy but it also keeps everyone around you healthy and happy.

Findings from the Surgeon General regarding quitting smoking

- ⊗ After one year off cigarettes, the excess risk of heart disease caused by smoking is reduced by half. After 15 years of abstinence, the risk is similar to that for people who've never smoked.
- ⊗ In 5 to 15 years, the risk of stroke for ex-smokers returns to the level of those who've never smoked.
- ⊗ Male smokers who quit between ages 35 to 39 add an average of 5 years to their lives. Female quitters in this age group add 3 years. Men and women who quit at ages 65 to 69 increase their life expectancy by 1 year.
- ⊗ Quitting smoking reduces the risk of repeat heart attacks and death from heart disease by 50 percent or more.

Ways to Quit Smoking

- ⊗ Find a support group. Get a fellow smoker to quit with you, join online support groups, or groups within your community.
- ⊗ Break the habit with another healthy habit. Eat a healthy snack when you get the urge to smoke, drink a glass of water or chew a piece of gum.
- ⊗ Exercise!!! The more you exercise and the less you smoke the easier exercising becomes. You will not be as short of breath and you'll be more motivated to go the extra mile.
- ⊗ Be patient with yourself and think positive. Keep in mind all the great benefits from quitting smoking.
- ⊗ Do not surround yourself with people who smoke. Stay away from restaurants, bars, etc. that allow you to smoke.

