



American Heart Association®

Hard Hats with Heart™



Toolbox Talks

The Benefits of Quitting Smoking Now

Having trouble quitting smoking? Concentrating on the benefits of cessation might just be the motivation you need. Everybody knows smoking and using tobacco is dangerous for your health. If the risks aren't motivation enough, let's look at the upside of quitting.

- In the first 20 minutes: your blood pressure and heart rate recover from the nicotine-induced spikes.
- After 12 hours: the carbon monoxide levels in your blood return to normal.
- After two weeks: your circulation and lung function begin to improve.
- After one to nine months: clear and deeper breathing gradually returns; you have less coughing and shortness of breath; you regain the ability to cough productively instead of hacking, which cleans your lungs and reduce your risk of infection.
- After one year: your risk of coronary heart disease is reduced by 50 percent.
- After 5 years: Your risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, and bladder are cut in half. Your risk of cervical cancer and stroke return to normal.
- After 10 years: You are half as likely to die from lung cancer. Your risk of larynx or pancreatic cancer decreases.
- After 15 years: your risk of coronary heart disease is the same as a non-smoker's.

What about e-cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products?

No tobacco product is safe, and there's no evidence that they can help you successfully quit smoking. They may be just as addictive and may contain dangerous levels of nicotine, chemicals, neurotoxins and metals. Talk with your doctor about safe and effective ways to quit smoking and stay tobacco-free.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is the first step to quitting?

Set your "Quit Day" and take a pledge to stop. Include people who will support you on your path to quitting.

How do I stay on track to quit?

Plan ahead. Think of enjoyable ways to fill the time when you may be tempted to smoke.

Discussion Questions:

- What is holding you/your loved ones back from quitting smoking?
- Do you feel that you have the resources and support you need to quit if you decide to?