Smokers have many beliefs about what smoking does for them. Some talk about how it helps them to relax; others say it helps them to stay thin or gives them something to do when they feel bored. Some smokers talk about their cigarettes the way they’d talk about their best friend. There are good reasons why smokers come to believe that smoking cigarettes provides benefits. It’s time to learn about the myths and the realities of smoking — and what to do about both.

**Smoking and Your Health**

You may know a lot about how smoking affects your health. The severe health risks of smoking may be why you want to stop. These risks may include lung cancer and other types of cancer, heart disease, chronic lung diseases, poor blood flow to the hands and feet, and early aging of the skin. Smoking can also play a role in impotence in men and infertility in women. All of these conditions can be caused or made worse by smoking.

Secondhand smoke is also dangerous. People who work around smokers are at risk. Smokers’ children and even smokers’ pets suffer from exposure to tobacco smoke.

**Some facts to consider:**

- Smoking is the leading cause of death and disability.
- More than 440,000 people in the United States die each year from smoking. That’s more than 1,000 people every day!
- Most smoking-related illnesses get worse if you continue to smoke.
- Each year, about 5,000 people in the United States who never smoked get cancer from contact with secondhand smoke.
- 2,000 U.S cases per year of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome may be related to secondhand smoke.
- There are more than 4,000 harmful chemicals in every cigarette. These chemicals are also found in nail polish remover, rat poison, mothballs, and toilet bowel cleaner. Thirty of them are known to cause cancer.

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A healthier life is on the line for you!

- Tars and particles in cigarette smoke clog the airways and shut down your lungs’ cleaning system.
- Carbon monoxide (CO) is also found in cigarette smoke. CO blocks the oxygen in the air you breathe from getting into your system. This starves your body of oxygen. By taking oxygen away from your heart, CO can cause heart disease and heart attacks.
- Nicotine in tobacco is addictive. It keeps you hooked on smoking and makes you feel uncomfortable when you don’t smoke often enough.
- If you are a pack-a-day smoker, you spend about $2,500 a year on cigarettes.
- Smoking does not get rid of stress; it can actually add to your stress.
- Cigarettes are not your friend. What kind of friend ruins your health, drains your wallet, and takes control of your daily life?

The Cost of Smoking

The true cost of smoking is found in the half-million deaths and disabilities it causes each year. But smoking also costs money. BIG money!

Use this worksheet to figure out how much money you spend on cigarettes each year.

Number of packs you smoke in a year if you smoke:
- 1 pack a day = 365
- 1½ packs a day = 548
- 2 packs a day = 730
- 2½ packs a day = 913
- 3 packs a day = 1,095

Number of packs I smoke in a year = ____________

Multiply by average cost per pack in dollars ($6 per pack)

This is how much I spend on cigarettes each year   $ ____________

This is how much I will spend on cigarettes in the next five years if I keep smoking   $_________

This is how much I will spend on cigarettes in the next 10 years if I keep smoking   $_________

Here’s what I could do with that money if I didn’t spend it on tobacco_ _____________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

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What Do I Get If I Quit?

Short-term Benefits
There are many rewards that come with quitting smoking. You will be able to taste, smell, and breathe better. You will enjoy having cleaner hair and fresher breath. You will also have more money for things you really want! You may enjoy “fitting in” better with the nonsmokers around you. You may like being a role model for young people who you do not want to smoke. Many ex-smokers discover a new sense of freedom. It feels good not to have to satisfy the need to smoke. All ex-smokers notice some of these pleasant changes soon after quitting. And these wonderful benefits are just the beginning!

Long-term Benefits
There are many important benefits to look forward to when you quit. Most of these relate to your health and your ability to enjoy life in the years to come. The benefits of staying quit get bigger and better as time goes on. Your breathing ability will get better and better, and so will your energy level. Your smoker’s cough will go away for good, and you will be likely to catch fewer colds. Your risk of heart attack, lung disease, and many cancers will continue to decrease the longer you stay quit. You will be likely to live longer and to have fewer health problems as an ex-smoker. And that’s great news!

The Truth about Quitting
It’s true: Most smokers make several serious attempts to quit before they quit for good. The reasons are simple. Quitting smoking is hard, and quitting is not something you just make yourself do. It’s something you learn to do. It’s a set of skills you have to master. Without knowing the challenges that lie ahead or the best ways to deal with them, it will be hard to get it right. When you learned to ride a bike, you skinned a knee or two in the process. In learning to quit smoking, you may hit some rough spots, too

The good news is that your health coach can help you keep the rough spots to a minimum. Your health coach can walk you through the process of quitting one step at a time and prepare you to take on each new challenge as it appears. If you start to slip, you’ll get tips you need to regain your balance and keep moving forward. Even if you fall down, you will know how to brush yourself off and get back on track. When you are ready to quit, your health coach will be there to support you.

Looking at Your Fears
Are you thinking of quitting but aren’t feeling ready to set a date to quit? Begin by thinking about the things that are holding you back. Here are some thoughts from other smokers who pondered quitting. Read them over and see if you relate to them. Then talk to your health coach. From getting started to staying smoke-free, your health coach can help you jump all the hurdles.
I’m afraid to quit
Are you thinking that you might not have what it takes to quit? Take a few minutes now to think about this:

- What are the some of the big things you have done in life?
- What successes are you most proud of?
- What about you helped you to achieve your goals and successes?

Think about your strengths. Now, add the right tools for quitting and you will have the perfect formula for success! Talk to your health coach about quitting tools that will be right for you.

I have too much stress in my life to quit
Simply put, smoking does not get rid of stress. It causes stress. When you smoke, your blood pressure and heart rate go up, just like when you get annoyed or upset.

But it may seem as if smoking helps you deal with stressful events. How can cigarettes fix a flat tire or stop the baby from crying? How can they patch things up with your boss or pay the bills? They can’t. It’s very important to learn healthy ways to cope with stress. It’s not that hard. Nonsmokers do it every day without leaning on cigarettes. You can, too! Your health coach can show you how.

I’ll gain too much weight if I quit
This is another myth about quitting. Not everyone gains weight when they quit. Those who do can keep gains to less than 10 pounds by planning ahead and using the right tools. If you do gain weight, you can get rid of any extra pounds when smoking is behind you. Besides, the total health risk of smoking one pack a day is about equal to the risk of carrying 100 pounds of extra body weight! Quitting is worth it! Ask your health coach for help avoiding weight gain.

I’ve tried to quit before
Think of quitting as learning a new behavior – a behavior called “not smoking.” When you started you had to learn how to smoke. At first you choked and your eyes watered. You fumbled when you tried to smoke and do something else. It took time and practice to get it right.

Quitting is about learning, too. Now you are learning how not to smoke. Like learning anything else, you need the right tools and skills to get it right.

Most smokers who try quitting are doomed from the start. They rely too much on their will to quit. They think that quitting is about being strong – strong enough to resist the urges and cravings, and strong enough to fight off withdrawal.

Others try medicine after medicine. First they try gum, then the patch, and then maybe a pill. They hope one of these medications can make them stop smoking.

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A healthier life is on the line for you!

Medicine is the best way to treat withdrawal. But it won’t help with the other ways you are hooked. You will need other tools to break free.

Worst of all, quitters repeat their mistakes. They vow to be stronger the next time they try. Or, they wait for the next medicine to come along. That’s why they keep failing.

Learn about all the ways you are hooked. Then use the right tools to quit. Being strong is good. Being smart is better. That’s the fastest way to a smoke-free life.

**But I love to smoke!**

Of course you do! Almost every smoker likes to smoke on some occasions. But most of the cigarettes smoked are not smoked for pleasure. Why then?

Your body gets used to the nicotine in tobacco. When it doesn’t get enough, often enough, it lets you know. You may feel anxious, testy, and restless. You may find it hard to stay focused. You may also have strong cravings. This is called nicotine withdrawal.

By smoking again, you replace the nicotine in your system. The bad feelings and cravings go away for awhile. Smokers confuse the quick relief they get by smoking with something that actually makes them feel good. That’s one way smokers get hooked.

Here’s the good news. Most smokers don’t know that withdrawal goes away on its own after a week or so of not smoking. Most also don’t realize that medication can help. There is no reason to suffer through withdrawal. Smoking-cessation medicines can give you the relief you seek. Then you can focus on learning to quit.

Experts agree: The best way to quit smoking is to use cessation medicine and a quit-smoking program. In fact, by using these together, you will be six times more likely to quit than someone who tries to be strong enough to quit on his or her own! Your health coach has the right program option for you. You can choose one that best fits your personal needs. Your health coach can also inform you of medicine options. With a personal quit plan, you can quit for good!

**What’s next?**

You don’t need to get rid of all of your desire to smoke before you decide to quit. That may not happen until after you stop smoking. The main thing now is to decide: Do you want to smoke more than you want to quit? Or, do you want to quit more than you want to smoke?

Choose quitting! Then talk with your health coach about the next step. Your health coach has the right tools to help you get ready to quit.
Sizing Up Quitting

Be as honest as you can be in making each of the following two lists. Make each list as long as you can. Think hard about your reasons for wanting to continue to smoke. Also think hard about your reasons for wanting to quit. Be fair to both sides of the issue.

Why I want to smoke:
1. _________________________________________
2. _________________________________________
3. _________________________________________
4. _________________________________________
5. _________________________________________
6. _________________________________________
7. _________________________________________
8. _________________________________________
9. _________________________________________
10. _________________________________________

Why I want to quit:
1. _________________________________________
2. _________________________________________
3. _________________________________________
4. _________________________________________
5. _________________________________________
6. _________________________________________
7. _________________________________________
8. _________________________________________
9. _________________________________________
10. _________________________________________

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## Take Action

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<tr>
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<th>Check when completed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em><em>My SMART</em> goal for this week</em>*</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do your best to reach the SMART goal you set with your health coach. Write it here. Check the box when you have completed it.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Staying on the path to wellness</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>If you are thinking about quitting, talk to your doctor about the medicines listed on the next page. They can help you succeed in your attempt to be tobacco-free. You can buy some of these medicines over the counter. Others require prescriptions. Ask your doctor which ones might be best for you. Also, check with your health insurance about which medicines are covered and what copayments might apply.</td>
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*SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Appropriate, Realistic, and Timely. For example, “On Saturday I will print out this tip sheet and underline or highlight the arguments for quitting that are most important to me. I will keep the tip sheet on hand where I can review it often, such as on my placemat at the kitchen table.”

SMART goals help you succeed! If you have any trouble setting your weekly SMART goals, ask your health coach for help.

The information in this tip sheet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Before making changes, always talk to your doctor about what is right for you.