

# How Smoking Affects You

## And Tips to Help You Quit



Samaritan  
Health Plans

Healthier Together.

A wellness publication prepared for members of Samaritan Health Plans.

# Smoking is Harmful

Tobacco use kills more than 7,500 people in Oregon each year, making it the leading cause of preventable death. On average, smokers die 10 years earlier than non-smokers.

There are more than 7,000 chemicals in cigarettes, including hundreds that are toxic — nearly 70 are linked to cancer. Cigarettes and e-cigarettes contain nicotine, a very addictive substance. Once addicted, your brain expects nicotine regularly, causing cravings. Besides being addictive, nicotine can make you feel sick. It increases your heart rate and blood pressure, and can cause dizziness, anxiety, nausea and stomach pain.

## Effects of Smoking on the Body

Smoking harms nearly every organ of the body, and if you smoke, you are 10 times more likely to get cancer than a person who has never smoked. Smokers are also more likely to develop heart disease or have a stroke. Here are other ways smoking is harmful to your body:

- Your blood may become thick and sticky, putting extra stress on your blood vessels and heart.
- Your immune system may have a harder time fighting off illnesses.
- Smoking damages the tiny air sacs in your lungs, making it harder to breathe.
- Smoking can stain teeth and cause bad breath, tooth loss, gum disease and mouth cancer.



Secondhand smoke causes over 41,000 deaths per year in the United States.

## Smoking Affects Others

Secondhand smoke, the smoke breathed out by a smoker or comes from the end of a lit cigarette, is harmful to others — even in small amounts. It's considered a carcinogen (cancer-causing agent). Even in adults who have never smoked, secondhand smoke can cause heart disease, stroke and many types of cancer.

Babies are at higher risk of being born premature, having a low birth weight, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) if their mothers smoked or were exposed to secondhand smoke during pregnancy. Nicotine may also affect brain development in growing fetuses.

Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at greater risk of developing asthma, as well as ear and respiratory infections. Toxins in smoke can settle on surfaces such as hair, clothes, carpet and furniture. These toxins are especially harmful to babies, young children, and pets, as they are more likely to swallow or touch things that have these toxins on them.



## Benefits of Quitting

It's never too late to quit smoking. Quitting is one of the best things you can do to improve your health. As soon as you've quit smoking, your body will begin healing itself. Plus, there are other benefits to quitting.

- Your blood pressure, heart rate and body temperature return to normal.
- Sense of taste and smell will likely improve.
- You may breathe easier and cough less.
- You are less likely to catch colds and the flu, and may recover more quickly if you do get sick.
- Your appearance may improve, with healthier skin and teeth.
- Your home and clothing will smell better.
- You will set a good example for those around you, including children or grandchildren.
- You will have more money. See for yourself how much you can save at [smokefree.gov](https://www.smokefree.gov). Type 'How much will you save' in the search bar.

# Tips to Help You Quit



## **Make a list**

Make a list of the reasons you want to quit. Ask yourself questions like: What do I not like about smoking? How does smoking affect my health and the way I look? How will my life get better when I quit? Look at this list often to remind yourself why you want to quit.



## **Make a plan, set a quit date**

Decide when you want to quit and what you will need to help you. There isn't one way to quit; some quit cold turkey, others cut down the number of cigarettes they smoke over time. If you want to take a prescription to help with cravings, talk with your health care provider.



## **Tell someone about your choice**

Tell family and friends about your choice to quit and ask for understanding and support. Use quit-smoking programs — they'll increase your chances of being successful.



## **Remove cigarettes**

Removing cigarettes, ashtrays and lighters from your home and car will make it easier for you to quit. Don't spend time in places where others are smoking.



## **Find ways to make it easier**

The first few weeks after quitting may be hard. Have a plan to deal with nicotine withdrawal and cravings. Find ways to lower your stress without smoking. Plan healthy ways to reward yourself for each day, week, month or year since your last cigarette.



## **Don't give up**

It can take many tries to quit, and you will learn something new with each attempt. It may not be easy, but you can do it.

# Nicotine Withdrawal Symptoms

The first few days of quitting is often the hardest. Your brain is used to getting nicotine from cigarettes. When you stop smoking, you will likely have withdrawal symptoms. Withdrawal symptoms can be hard but they should get better after a week or two.

Withdrawal symptoms might include:

- Cravings to smoke
- Problems sleeping
- Feeling anxious or distracted
- Feeling cranky or in a bad mood
- Headaches or dizziness
- Depressed mood

## How to Deal with Cravings

When you are trying to quit smoking, it's normal to have cravings. When you feel an urge to smoke try to do something else. Some ideas to try:

- Call or text someone. It can be a friend or quit line number.
- Look at your list of reasons to quit.
- Go for a walk or play with a pet.
- Try meditations or deep breathing.
- Drink a glass of water, chew gum or eat a hard candy.
- Go somewhere you can't smoke, like the movies or a store.
- Keep your hands busy. Try knitting, gardening or crafts.

There may be certain places, activities or situations that make you want to smoke. These are called triggers. Understanding your triggers and changing your normal routine can help reduce the urge to smoke.



**You can use the tips in this brochure to help you quit chewing tobacco and other tobacco products too!**

# Support is Available

There are programs and support groups to help you or someone you love quit smoking. Some programs may cost money, which may be covered by your Samaritan health plan. Check your member handbook or call your plan for more information.

**SmokeFREE Oregon** | [smokefreeoregon.com](http://smokefreeoregon.com)

## **Oregon Quit Line**

800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669) | [quitnow.net/oregon](http://quitnow.net/oregon)

**Smokefree Tools** | [smokefree.gov](http://smokefree.gov)

Offers support, tips, tools and expert advice to help you or someone you love quit smoking.

**Smokefree TXT** Get 24/7 encouragement, advice, and tips for becoming smokefree and being healthier.

Visit [smokefree.gov/tools-tips/text-programs](http://smokefree.gov/tools-tips/text-programs) to sign up.

**Smokefree Apps** Have 24/7 support on your smart phone with the free **QuitGuide** and **quitSTART** apps.

**Freedom from Smoking** | [samhealth.org/freedomfromsmoking](http://samhealth.org/freedomfromsmoking)

Learn skills to help you quit and stay smoke-free. This free class meets eight times over a seven week period. You can register online or call 866-243-7747 for more information.

## Talk with Your Health Care Provider

Research shows that using prescription drugs, along with classes or support groups, will give you a better chance in quitting. Talk with your health care provider about tools to help you quit.

## Get Help From Your Health Plan

Call Customer Service Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. at 541-768-4550 or toll free 800-832-4580 (TTY: 800-735-2900) to find out how your health plan can help you quit smoking.



2300 NW Walnut Blvd., Corvallis, OR 97330  
800-832-4580 (TTY: 800-735-2900)

**[samhealthplans.org](https://www.samhealthplans.org)**

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