



1. Why should you stop smoking?

Smoking is dangerous to your health. Each year, more than 435,000 Americans die from smoking related diseases. Stopping smoking is the most important thing you can do to improve your health and quality of life.

2. What are the benefits of stopping smoking?

Stopping smoking is beneficial at all ages. People who stop smoking:

- Lower their risks of cancer, heart disease, lung disease and stroke
- Have less problems with pregnancy and have healthier babies
- Have more energy
- Breathe easier

3. How can you stop smoking?

- **Get ready** – choose a day to stop smoking and throw away all cigarettes and ashtrays in your home, car and workplace
- **Get support** – tell your friends and family or get support by calling the California Smokers' Helpline (1-800-NO-BUTTS) for free counseling
- **Get medication**– talk to your doctor or health care provider for advice
- **Learn a new way of living** – keep busy, stay active and exercise, drink lots of water and do something fun
- **Be prepared** – avoid drinking alcohol; do not be around other smokers

4. How can you take control of cravings and urges?

Most nicotine cravings only last three to five minutes, and as time passes, cravings will become weaker and farther apart.

When cravings come, try to:

- **Delay** the urge for a cigarette
- **Distract** yourself by doing something else
- Take a **Deep** breath to release stress
- **Drink** a lot of water

No matter what, *don't* think, "Just one won't hurt." It *will* hurt. It will undo your work so far. Remind yourself about the reasons you wanted to quit and tell yourself *you can do it*. For many people, it can take many tries before they can stop smoking. The first two weeks are usually the hardest. Stay positive!

5. What are some of the challenges to stop smoking?

Stopping smoking is hard, especially for those who smoked a lot of cigarettes for a long period of time. Withdrawal symptoms can include any of the following:

- Dizziness
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Feelings of anger and frustration
- Trouble concentrating
- Restlessness
- Headaches
- Tiredness

Some weight gain (less than 10 lbs.) and increased appetite can also happen. Regular physical activity and a balanced diet can help you keep a healthy weight. Talk to your doctor if you have any questions.

6. How can I help someone I know stop smoking?

You can let your loved ones know that you care about their health and they have your support. Give them the California Smokers' Helpline phone number (1-800-NO-BUTTS) for *free* help to stop smoking.

Sources

1. *Quit Smoking*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/>
2. *Quitting Smoking*. National Cancer Institute. <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Tobacco/cessation>
3. *Quitting*. www.californiasmokershelpline.org/Information/pdf_files/How_Can_I_Help_My_Friends_and_Family.pdf
4. *Cravings*. http://www.californiasmokershelpline.org/Information/pdf_files/Take_Control_of_Cravings_and_Urges.pdf

For additional resources, visit the L.A. County Department of Public Health website <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov>.