

Smoking

Using tobacco is one of the most dangerous things you can do. Nicotine temporarily increases heart rate and blood pressure and can produce clumping or stickiness in the blood vessels feeding the heart. This may lead to a heart attack. For those with, or at risk for, diabetes, smoking increases the possibility of a vascular event (i.e., heart attack or stroke).



Helpful hints for quitting:

1. Many smokers often need help to quit successfully. For this reason, there are smoking cessation programs and pharmacological choices (such as the patch, gum) available to help smokers quit. Speak with your doctor about what smoking cessation tools may be helpful for you.
2. Prepare by letting people know you are quitting and if they are smokers, plan how you will cope with having them in your life.
3. Start by picking a specific day to quit.
4. Throw away any cigarettes and other reminders of smoking you have (ashtrays, matches, lighters) before your quit day.
5. Keep reminding yourself of the reasons you are quitting (cost, to protect your health). You may want to use visual reminders (notes on mirrors or on the refrigerator) to keep you on track.
6. Steer clear of situations or places that tempt you to smoke.
7. Remember that quitting is not easy and often takes more than one try. If you are unsuccessful the first time you try, instead of being hard on yourself, learn from your experiences and redouble your efforts.

Common Myths About Smoking:

MYTH: Low-tar and low-nicotine cigarettes are safe.

TRUTH: There is no evidence that these cigarettes are any less of a threat to your health than regular cigarettes. Many people who smoke these cigarettes think they can smoke more because they believe this myth, which increases their risk for heart disease even more.

This resource provides brief, general information about this health care topic. It does not take the place of the instructions you receive from your health care providers. Discuss the risks and benefits of therapies with your doctor and always take medication as prescribed. For answers to other questions talk to your health care provider.

For more information or a referral, please call the NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital Preventive Cardiology Program at (212) 305-4866 or visit our website at:

<http://www.hearthealthtimes.com>.



MYTH: I have to be on a stringent diet in order not to gain weight when I quit.

TRUTH: While weight gain is a realistic concern while quitting, smoking is an unhealthy method of controlling your weight. While attempting to quit, practice sensible eating and maintain a healthy level of physical activity. Speak to your doctor if weight gain is a concern for you.

MYTH: I have other options besides quitting (such as waiting or cutting down).

TRUTH: There are no other options. In order to prevent death and disease from smoking, quit and quit now.

MYTH: Quitting will not improve my health.

TRUTH: Yes, it will. According to research, it has been found that one year after quitting smoking, a person's risk for heart disease decreases by 50%, and within 15 years of quitting, the risk of dying from heart disease is almost the same as that of a lifetime non-smoker.

Goals:

- If you smoke and want to quit, ask your doctor, dentist, or other health care provider about treatment options. Seeking guidance from a qualified health professional can sometimes make all the difference.
- Avoid environmental tobacco smoke. Environmental tobacco smoke is not only a nuisance, but it also has been shown to be an actual cause of disease. In addition, environmental tobacco smoke can often trigger people back to smoking.

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