



Tobacco use

Do you want to live tobacco-free? Using tobacco can affect your health in many ways. Most likely you've heard some of the warnings. But have you ever really thought about them? Look at the list below and think about the health-related problems you'd like to avoid:

- Coughing and breathing problems like asthma, bronchitis or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Mouth cancer, throat cancer or lung cancer
- Heart problems or high blood pressure
- Bad breath or yellow teeth and fingernails
- Problems with taste or smell
- Wrinkles around the mouth
- Not able to get pregnant or having problems during pregnancy

No matter your age or how long you've been using tobacco, it is not too late to quit. Breaking the habit can add years to your life. It can greatly reduce your chances of developing cancer, heart disease and COPD. Quitting isn't easy. But there are treatments that work and resources to help you.

Where to Find Support

You can start by talking to your doctor about your desire to quit and the treatment options. You may benefit from:

- Counseling (individual, group or via telephone)
- Behavioral therapy
- Nicotine replacement products (over-the-counter or prescription)

The West Virginia Tobacco Quitline, 1-800-QUIT-NOW, is a **free** telephone support service that can help you to stop using tobacco. By calling, you can get:

- Free support and advice from a Quit Coach
- A free Tobacco Quit Kit
- Self-help materials
- Coping strategies for dealing with cravings and withdrawal

Making a lifestyle change

Nicotine, the drug in tobacco, is addictive. When your body stops getting nicotine, withdrawal symptoms are common. You may have nicotine cravings, anger, frustration, anxiety and weight gain. These symptoms are usually worse in the beginning but improve over time. Even the strongest cravings last less than three minutes.

It is normal to feel overwhelmed when you are trying to quit using tobacco. It's OK to ask for help if you feel like you need it. You may need support to help manage your stress or to prevent depression. We can help you find resources or get referrals to behavioral health providers. Change can be hard, but we want you to succeed. And you can!



Tips for staying tobacco-free

Once you've taken the first steps, the following list of tips can help you manage your tobacco cravings:

- Remind yourself that the craving will pass
- Avoid situations and activities you used to associate with using tobacco
- Try chewing on carrots, pickles, apples, celery, sugarless gum or hard candy
- Take a deep breath through your nose and blow out slowly through your mouth; repeat it 10 times
- Ask your doctor about nicotine replacement products or other medications

Support to help you be tobacco-free

We can help you:

- Talk to your family or caregiver about your efforts to quit using tobacco
- Find community programs and resources in your area
- Talk with your doctor and get the most out of your visit:
 - Ask any questions you may have about your cravings, withdrawal symptoms and nicotine replacement products. You can write them down and take them with you to your visit.
 - Follow your doctor's advice. If you have questions or concerns, let your doctor know.
 - Make sure your doctor knows what medicines you are taking.

Important screenings

- Depression
- Other health conditions
- Preventive care screenings such as wellness checkups, mammograms and Pap tests

For more helpful information about tobacco cessation

- [Medline Plus](#)
- [National Cancer Institute at the National Institutes of Health](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)
- [Smokefree.gov](#)
- The West Virginia Tobacco Quitline: 1-800-QUIT-NOW

Sources:

* Medline Plus

Quitting Smoking

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/quittingsmoking.html, accessed November 8, 2013.



* National Cancer Institute at the National Institutes of Health
How To Handle Withdrawal Symptoms and Triggers When You Decide To Quit Smoking
www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Tobacco/symptoms-triggers-quitting, accessed November 8, 2013.

* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Smoking and Tobacco Use
www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/cessation/quitting/index.htm, accessed November 8, 2013.

* Smokefree.gov
Steps to Prepare
<http://smokefree.gov/qg-preparing-steps.aspx>, accessed November 8, 2013.

We can translate this for you at no cost.

Call the Customer Care Center at **1-800-782-0095**. If you have speech or hearing loss, call the TTY line at **1-866-368-1634**.