



I Quit!

A Special Edition on Smoking Cessation

Smoking is the largest cause of preventable death in the world. In Singapore, about seven Singaporeans die prematurely from smoking-related diseases every day. Smoking-related diseases such as cancer, heart disease and stroke are the nation's top killers.

If you are a smoker, the best decision you can make for your own and loved ones' interests is to quit smoking. It takes a lot of courage to make the first step to decide to quit smoking but you will definitely gain from your decision. Read on to know the multiple benefits of kicking the habit and helpful tips to quit smoking for good.

Benefits Of Giving Up Smoking

Health Benefits

Giving up smoking definitely benefits the health of both men and women of all ages. Abstinence from smoking for a short span of time can even yield some positive health results as indicated in the table below.

Within 20 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blood pressure decreases • Body temperature of hands and feet increases • Pulse rate drops
Within 8 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon monoxide and nicotine levels in the blood decrease (to normal level) • Oxygen level in the blood increases (to normal level)
Within 24 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The risk of heart attack decreases • The lungs will start to clear out mucus and toxin
Within 2 - 12 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blood circulation improves • Exercising and walking become easier • Lung function increases
Within 1 - 9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tendency to have shortness of breath, sinus congestion, cough and fatigue will decrease
Within 1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of heart attack will decrease to half, as compared to a smoker
Within 5 - 10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk of stroke and coronary heart disease will be reduced to that of someone who has never smoked • Risk of lung cancer will decrease to about half of that of a smoker

Benefits To Physical Well-being

Besides the absence of smokers' cough and other respiratory problems, other benefits also include:

- Looking and feeling better
- Better sense of taste and smell
- Increase in energy and improvement in stamina

Benefits To Psychological Wellness

- Improvement to self-esteem

Benefits To Loved Ones

By giving up smoking, smokers also protect their family and friends from the harmful effects of passive smoking (breathing in second-hand smoke) such as:

- Eye, nose and throat infection, headaches, dizziness, nausea, cough and wheezing after brief exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (ETS), also known as second-hand smoke

- Aggravation of symptoms for people with asthma or allergies
- Heart and lung disease after long-term exposure to ETS

Children are especially vulnerable to the harmful effects of second-hand smoke. This is because they breathe faster than adults and inhale more air and pollutants relative to their weight.

- Children of non-smokers are less likely to develop respiratory infections, middle ear infections, asthma and chronic bronchitis than children of smokers
- The risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is lower when parents do not smoke compared to those who smoke
- Children of non-smokers are less likely to start smoking themselves compared to children of smokers

Tips On Giving Up Smoking

1. Set a quit date and stick to it
2. Use Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) such as patch, nicotine mint lozenges or Nicorette chewing gum or bupropion (Zyban) as advised by your doctor.
3. Avoid thinking and having one puff. Having "just one cigarette" usually leads back to your regular smoking habit.
4. Throw away all leftover cigarettes and your ashtrays.
5. Tell everyone you are trying to quit smoking - you need their support.
6. Stay in a smoke-free environment as much as possible. Request your smoker friends or colleagues to refrain from smoking around you. Avoid buying, holding or lighting cigarettes for them.
7. Adjust your daily routine to avoid the places and times you used to smoke
8. Engage in a hobby or an exercise regime to divert your attention from smoking. Have a sugar-free sweet/lozenge when the urge hits.
9. Stop the craving for a cigarette by brushing your teeth, drinking a glass of water, relaxing in a bath, exercising or going for a walk etc. It will take a while to get used to life without cigarettes.

The 4Ds to giving up smoking:

- 1 Delay** taking out a cigarette to smoke.
- 2 Divert** your attention from smoking. Pick up new hobbies.
- 3 Do** deep breathing exercises.
- 4 Drink** lots of water - it helps to reduce the urge to smoke.

If you are a smoker and would like to quit smoking, or if you know of someone who would like to give up smoking, please contact NUH's Smoking Cessation Clinic at 6772 5733 for professional help. Alternatively, you can call the Health Promotion Board's (HPB) QUITLINE at 1800 438 2000.

For more information on smoking cessation, visit the HPB website at <http://www.hpb.gov.sg/hpb/Quit4Life>.