

# HEALTH IN OUR HANDS!

The Arkansas State University Wellness Program Newsletter  
[www.astate.edu/college/conhp](http://www.astate.edu/college/conhp)



## Smoking Cessation

### Health Effects of Smoking

Smoking harms almost every organ in your body. In the United States, smoking causes one out of five deaths each year. Smoking can cause hearing loss, blindness and decreased night vision, gum disease and other oral health problems, and lead to smoker's face. A smoker's face is characterized by the skin being dry and losing its elasticity and the tone of the skin may become dull and grayish. Smoking raises a person's blood pressure putting stress on the heart that can cause heart disease including heart attacks. Blood becomes more viscous which could lead to blood clots and increase risk for heart attack or stroke. Smoking causes cholesterol to raise and other debris to build up in the arteries narrowing and blocking blood flow to the heart. In the lungs, smoking can cause inflammation and scarring in the airways and tissue, emphysema and kills cilia making respiratory infections more common. Cigarettes cause damage to your DNA and this can lead to cancer. Smoking can cause lung, esophagus, larynx, mouth,

throat, kidney, bladder, pancreas, stomach, and cervix cancer. In females, smoking causes lower estrogen levels. In males it can lead to erectile dysfunction. Smoking weakens the immune system slowing down healing time. People who smoke are at a greater risk of broken bones because cigarette smoke decreases the density of bones causing muscle deterioration.

### Benefits of Quitting

- After 1 year the risk of coronary heart disease is cut in half.
- Decreased risk of early death. Smokers on average die 13-14 years earlier than people who don't smoke.
- Decreases chances of lung cancer and other lung diseases.
- Decreases the chance of impotence and fertility.
- Within 20 minutes your heart rate and blood pressure drop.

- In 3 months circulation and lung function improves.

### A Plan to Quit

There are many ways to quit and the only way to be successful is to find the way that works for you. Steps to quitting include:

1. Find your reason(s). A common reason to quit smoking is to improve health. Other reasons include health of family/children, saving money and living longer.
2. Set a date to start quitting that is within two weeks after making the decision to quit. Set milestone dates and a date to finish.
3. Tell friends and family that you plan to quit. Tell them your reasons for quitting and how they can help you quit.
4. Anticipate and plan for challenges. The first few weeks of quitting are the hardest and people often experience withdrawal symptoms. Withdrawal symptoms include feeling

depressed, insomnia, irritability, and trouble concentrating. It's important to learn your smoking triggers and how to deal with them. Cravings are usually short and can be intense urges to smoke. The best way to deal with challenges is to come up with a short list of activities to do when the cravings happen to you.

5. Remove cigarettes and other tobacco from your home, car and work. Throw away all cigarettes, lighters, matches and ashtrays. Clean your car and house to remove the smell of cigarettes.
6. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about quitting options.

### Ways to Quit

According to research, the way to be the most successful at quitting is to use both counseling and medication. Using nicotine replacement products and/or medicine doubles your chances of quitting. Nicotine is the addictive part of smoking but the harmful part of smoking is the tar and carbon monoxide. Nicotine replacement products help with the cravings and withdrawal symptoms. There are many support systems out there. You can find support on the telephone, internet or join a class. There are also one-on-one counseling options available to help people stop smoking. Experienced counselors have practical ideas that help you succeed at quitting. There are applications that can be downloaded on apple and android devices to help people

stop smoking such as QuitSTART app and NCI QuitPal along with many others. The Arkansas Tobacco Quitline is available at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).

### Individual Quit Plan

A quit plan helps you stay focused and motivated to quit. One of the most important things to do when quitting is staying busy. Staying busy can be as simple as drinking lots of water, getting out of the house, chewing gum or hard candy or relaxing with deep breathing exercises. You should avoid all smoking triggers such as restaurants that allow smoking, caffeine, and being around others that are smoking. Set realistic goals for the entire process and reward yourself when you reach each milestone. Keeping a smoking journal helps increase the chances of you sticking to your goals. Remember to pace yourself. Reduce the number of cigarettes you smoke each day over the course of several weeks and set a comfortable pace. Try to figure out your triggers and then make new smoking habits/rituals. Cut down on stress and start new activities to help deal with stress. Be prepared for relapses. Most people are not successful the first time they try to quit. Don't give up if you smoke a little. Try to come up with new ways to fight the urge and another relapse by talking to someone. Quitting is hard, but it can be done.

### Electronic Cigarettes

Electronic cigarettes are battery operated products designed to turn nicotine and

other chemicals into vapor. They are designed to look like cigarettes, cigars or pipes. There are still studies being conducted on whether e-cigarettes contain ingredients that are toxic to humans. These cigarettes can vary in their levels of nicotine ranging from high doses to no nicotine at all. There was a study in New Zealand that found that e-cigarettes are equally as effective at helping people quit smoking as nicotine patches. **However, in 2009 an analysis of the cartridges found cancer-causing substances in half of the samples from two of the leading e-cigarette brands.** More research is needed to determine if they are actually safer than real cigarettes. They can be used to resolve nicotine cravings and they can be used in nonsmoking areas. They come in flavors ranging from menthol to cherry, chocolate or even cola. Hundreds of flavors are available.

### References

- [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)
- [www.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.nlm.nih.gov)
- [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)
- [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)
- [smokefree.gov](http://smokefree.gov)

### Other News:

\*\*If you have any suggestions for newsletter topics, please contact Dean Susan Hanrahan at [hanrahan@astate.edu](mailto:hanrahan@astate.edu).

\*\*\*\*\*

The Arkansas State University Employee Wellness Newsletter is published monthly during the academic year by the College of Nursing and Health Professions. Health questions can be addressed to Dean Susan Hanrahan, Ph.D., ext. 3112 or [hanrahan@astate.edu](mailto:hanrahan@astate.edu). Produced by Michelle Williams, graduate student in the College of Nursing and Health Professions, Physical Therapy Program.