



## Patient Education Handout Tobacco Cessation General Information

Tobacco use can lead to nicotine dependence and serious health problems. Cessation can significantly reduce the risk of suffering from smoking-related diseases. Tobacco dependence is a chronic condition that often requires repeated interventions, but effective treatments and helpful resources exist. Smokers can and do quit smoking. In fact, today there are more former smokers than current smokers.

**Nicotine Dependence:** Nicotine is the psychoactive drug in tobacco products that produces dependence. Most smokers are dependent on nicotine. **Nicotine dependence is the most common form of chemical dependence in the United States.** Research suggests that nicotine is as addictive as heroin, cocaine, or alcohol. Quitting smoking is difficult and may require multiple attempts. Users often relapse because of stress, weight gain, and withdrawal symptoms. Examples of nicotine withdrawal symptoms include irritability, anxiety, difficulty concentrating, and increased appetite.

**Health benefits of cessation:** Breaking free from nicotine dependence is not the only reason to quit smoking. Cigarette smoke contains more than 7000 chemicals. Hundreds are toxic and about 70 are carcinogenic (i.e., cause cancer). Fortunately, people who stop smoking greatly reduce their risk for disease and premature death.<sup>7,8</sup> Although the health benefits are greater for people who stop at earlier ages, cessation is beneficial at all ages.

### **Smoking cessation is associated with the following health benefits:**

- Smoking cessation lowers the risk for lung and other types of cancer.
- Smoking cessation reduces the risk for coronary heart disease, stroke, and peripheral vascular disease. Coronary heart disease risk is reduced within 1 to 2 years of cessation.
- Smoking cessation reduces respiratory symptoms, such as coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath. The rate of decline in lung function is slower among persons who quit smoking.
- Smoking cessation reduces the risk of developing chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), one of the leading causes of death in the United States.
- Smoking cessation by women during their reproductive years reduces the risk for infertility. Women who stop smoking during pregnancy also reduce their risk of having a low birth weight baby.

**Smokers attempts to quit:** Among current U.S. adult smokers, 70% report that they want to quit completely, and millions have attempted to quit smoking.<sup>11</sup> In 2008, an estimated 48 million adults (aged 18 years or older) were former smokers.

### **Methods to quit smoking:**

#### **Effective treatments that can increase the chances of successful cessation include the following:**

- Brief clinical interventions (i.e., when a doctor takes 10 minutes or less to deliver advice and assistance about quitting)

- Counseling (e.g., individual, group, or telephone counseling)
- Behavioral cessation therapies (e.g., training in problem solving)
- Treatments with more person-to-person contact and intensity (e.g., more time with counselors)

**Cessation medications found to be effective for treating tobacco dependence include the following:**

Over-the-counter and prescription nicotine replacement products (e.g., nicotine gum, inhaler, nasal spray, lozenge, or patch)<sup>1</sup>

Prescription nonnicotine medications, such as bupropion SR (Zyban®) and varenicline tartrate (Chantix®).

**The combination of medication and counseling is more effective for smoking cessation than either medication or counseling alone.**

**Helpful Resources:**

**Quitline Services**

1-800-QUIT-NOW is a **free** telephone support service that can help individuals who want to stop smoking or using tobacco. Callers have access to several types of cessation information and services, including:

- Free support and advice from experienced counselors
- A personalized quit plan
- Self-help materials
- Social support and coping strategies
- The latest information about cessation medications
- Over-the-counter nicotine replacement medications for eligible participants (in more than half of U.S. states)

**Cessation Services**

- CDC's How to Quit Web pages provide a variety of cessation tips, tools, and resources.
- Smokefree.gov is a Web site dedicated to helping smokers quit.

**Additional Information:**

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**For Coastal Health & Wellness Patients:**

If you have any questions about this information, please discuss with your provider at your next healthcare appointment or call the Coastal Health & Wellness NurseLine at 409-938-2234.

Based on information from [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

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