



In what ways  
does smoking  
affect my health  
as someone  
living with HIV?

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS  
MDAnderson  
~~Cancer~~ Center

Making Cancer History®

# Smoking is especially dangerous if you are living with HIV.

## Did you know?

**If you are living with HIV, smoking can result in:**

- Reduced effectiveness of antiretroviral therapy (ART)
- Experiencing more HIV-related symptoms
- More severe respiratory infections
- A weakened immune system, which can lead to more HIV-related oral and lung infections, for example, thrush, leukoplakia and pneumonia.
- Double the risk of cardiovascular disease compared with people living with HIV who do not smoke.

**Even if you do not smoke, living with HIV means you have a higher risk for smoking-related cancers due to a weakened immune system. Smoking further increases these risks.**



If you are living with HIV, you are twice as likely to smoke than the general population and are less likely to quit.

## The myths & the facts

**MYTH:** I'm living with HIV and smoking doesn't affect my health.

**FACT:** Smoking significantly worsens your health if you are living with HIV. It impacts HIV-related conditions and non-HIV-related conditions.

**MYTH:** Smoking helps me to cope with the stress of living with HIV.

**FACT:** You can manage stress with healthy coping mechanisms like:

- Finding support through friends, family, support groups or a counselor.
- Engaging in relaxation techniques, like meditation.
- Finding activities to reduce stress, like physical activity.

**Quitting tobacco can help you lead a healthier life and experience fewer HIV-related symptoms.**

- View Brian I.'s story from the Tips From Former Smoker's® campaign
  - [TinyURL.Com/BrianTFFS](http://TinyURL.Com/BrianTFFS)

# Ready to quit tobacco use?

## **How to get help:**

- Visit [Cancer-Network.org/Outlast-Tobacco](https://www.cancer-network.org/Outlast-Tobacco) for more information.
- Call 1-800-784-8669 for your state's tobacco Quitline.
- Text QUIT to 47848 for a smoke-free texting program.
- Visit [LGBTQHealthCareDirectory.Org](https://www.lgbtqhealthcaredirectory.org) to find LGBTQ+-friendly healthcare near you.