



Stay smoke-free: Tips to prevent relapse



Quitting smoking is a challenge. Less than one out of every 10 people who try to quit will be successful.

Returning to smoking after quitting is called relapsing. **The good news is that there are ways to prevent and recover from relapse.**

Plan for relapse, even before you try to quit.

Get a quit smoking plan from your doctor:

- The best way to stop smoking is with medication and counseling.
- Medications such as varenicline, bupropion and nicotine replacement therapy are effective at helping people quit smoking.
- Using some medications for a longer period of time may prevent relapse.

Plan for situations that might place you at high risk of relapse, such as:

- Drinking alcohol or being around others drinking alcohol
- Stressful situations like work, interpersonal conflict and financial stress
- Places where you used to smoke
- People who smoke or who you used to smoke with
- Weight gain

Use one of these strategies to help you cope when you feel like smoking:

- Leave the situation
- Take a few deep breaths
- Count to 10
- Chew gum
- Eat something, like candy or a meal
- Go for a walk
- Call someone who supports your quit smoking plan
- Exercise
- Do something you enjoy, like fishing, painting or crafts
- Listen to music
- Watch TV or a movie
- Read a book

You can also use your thoughts to help prevent a relapse:

- Tell yourself that you can succeed
- Remember why you chose to quit
- Remind yourself of the progress you've made so far
- Picture the life you want to live smoke-free
- Remind yourself that cravings typically only last 3–20 minutes
- Remember that cravings will decrease over time if you stay smoke-free

Relapse is not failure.

If you do smoke a cigarette, be kind to yourself:

- Think of that cigarette as a slip that you can change
- Learn from the experience:
 - Identify factors that led to smoking the cigarette
 - Make a plan for what you can do differently next time
- Try again:
 - Consider talking to your doctor about how you can get back on track

Reduce your risk of lung cancer.

Quit smoking today. Smoking cigarettes is the number one risk factor for lung cancer.

The best way to quit is by using medication and counseling.

- Call 1-800-784-8669 or text QUIT to 47848.
- Talk to your doctor about treatment options.
- Visit [SmokeFree.gov](https://www.smokefree.gov) for more information.

This literature was developed with support from the Cancer Prevention & Research Institute of Texas.