

Exploring Myths and Facts About Tobacco Use



Myth: It is nearly impossible to quit tobacco or other nicotine products, no matter how many times or how hard you try.



Fact: Quitting tobacco products is hard because nicotine is so addictive and people often try to do it without counseling or enough medication. However, quitting is possible, especially with support.

- Most people try to quit all at once or without help, but evidence shows medication and counseling give people the best chance to become and stay tobacco-free.
- Treatment options are also available for people who are not ready to quit. Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) can help them relieve cravings and discomfort. Using NRT can give people more control in day-to-day activities without worrying about how to get through situations where they cannot smoke.
- Relapse is not a failure. It takes almost everyone who tries to quit multiple attempts before being successful.



Myth: People who do not use tobacco products every day or who “smoke socially” do not have to worry about the impact on their health.



Fact: There is no safe level of tobacco use or secondhand smoke exposure.

Any amount of tobacco use is hazardous to your health.



Myth: Since it is tobacco smoke that contains deadly chemicals, just switch to e-cigarettes and the problem is solved.



Fact: The long-term health effects of e-cigarette use are unknown.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not closely monitor or test e-cigarette ingredients. Chemical content in e-cigarettes, including the amount of nicotine, can vary greatly. We do not know the long-term effects of using e-cigarettes, but the aerosol from heated e-liquids can contain harmful chemicals, such as:

- Formaldehyde and benzene, which can cause cancer
- Diacetyl from flavoring, which is linked to lung disease
- Heavy metals, including nickel, tin and lead

No e-cigarettes have been approved by the FDA to help people quit smoking. Safe options, such as NRT and other tobacco treatment medications, exist, work and are covered by most health insurance plans.

We will continue to learn more about the health effects of e-cigarettes over time.



Myth: There is no point in quitting when you have been smoking for so many years.



Fact: Quitting smoking will improve your health no matter how old you are or how long you have smoked.

The sooner you quit smoking, the sooner your body can start to heal. You may notice some benefits quickly, but you will see even more over time:

- In a few weeks, you will start to cough less and breathe easier.
- In one year, your risk of having a heart attack will fall significantly.
- In two to five years, your risk of a stroke begins to be about the same as that of a person who does not smoke.
- Over time, your risk for other conditions, including mouth, throat and lung cancer and diabetes, will continue to fall.

Quitting smoking will also help you save money and protect those around you from secondhand smoke.