

smoking, pre-diabetes & diabetes

If I have pre-diabetes or diabetes, do I really need to quit smoking?

YES! Smoking increases the risk of serious health problems associated with diabetes. People with pre-diabetes are already at high risk of heart disease. Smoking makes this even worse. You can significantly improve your health by quitting. Quitting at any age will benefit your health but the earlier you stop the more you gain.

Why is it so hard to quit?

Tobacco contains nicotine, one of the most addictive substances known. It causes physical and psychological dependence and makes kicking the habit of smoking very difficult.

How does smoking affect my health?

Smoking affects your health in many ways. It can:

- Increase the risk of heart attack, stroke and cardiovascular disease compared with a non-smoker who has pre-diabetes or diabetes (read on for ways to reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular disease).
- Increase blood glucose levels. Tobacco use can increase insulin resistance and stimulate stress hormones. Both increase blood glucose levels and make it more difficult to manage pre-diabetes and diabetes.
- Increase the risk of lung, mouth and throat cancer.
- Contribute to nerve and blood vessel damage.
- Cause blood vessels to become constricted, reducing the amount of oxygen reaching the tissues of the body. This is due to the many harmful compounds in tobacco and inhaled tobacco smoke.
- Increase the risk of erectile dysfunction (also known as impotence).
- Increase the risk of developing serious foot problems and kidney damage.
- Increase the risk of damage to teeth and gums.

By giving up smoking, you can reduce your risk of a range of life threatening conditions including cancer of the lungs, mouth and throat, heart attack, stroke, cardiovascular disease, eye disease and damage to your nerve and blood vessels. It will also help to improve your blood glucose levels.



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How to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease

- Don't smoke.
- Maintain cholesterol, triglycerides and blood pressure within the recommended ranges.
- Follow a healthy eating plan and try to keep body weight as normal as possible.
- Do regular physical activity.
- Maintain blood glucose levels within the recommended range.
- Talk to your doctor about aspirin medication. This may help in people who are at high risk.

Why do people smoke?

People smoke for different reasons. For example, smoking may:

- Make a person feel they have more energy. This is because nicotine can act as a stimulant.
- Help to make a person feel more at ease.
- Bring pleasure at the time.
- Suppress appetite.

If you've tried to quit before but went back to smoking because you found it too hard, you can still quit successfully.

How do I quit?

It is common for smokers to try to quit a number of times before being able to stop smoking for good. By planning your efforts to quit and getting support from your doctor, the Quitline and your friends and family, you will increase your chance of success.

Tips to help you give up smoking

- Make your home smoke-free. You are more likely to be successful.
- Throw away cigarettes, lighters and ashtrays from your home and car.
- If people you live with smoke, suggest that they also stop smoking, or only smoke outside the house. (Remember that children also suffer if people smoke inside).
- Work out how to handle the places and situations that make you want to smoke.
- Plan ahead: Consider alternative things you could do instead of smoking when you feel cravings. However, try to resist the temptation to drink more coffee, cola or tea. In fact it's best to drink less caffeine, as your body will retain more caffeine when you quit. Instead, try water, plain mineral water or low joule/low caffeine drinks.
- Remember that each craving only lasts a few minutes.
- Use the four D's: DELAY smoking – DEEP breaths – DRINK water – DO something else.
- Talk to your family and friends about how they can help and encourage you to quit.
- Treat yourself with the money you've saved. Your efforts deserve to be rewarded!

Understand why you smoke

- If you feel smoking gives you more energy, look at other ways to increase your energy levels. This might include doing more physical activity, eating healthy foods, getting more sleep and avoiding boredom, perhaps by taking up a new activity that you can't do while you are smoking.
- If having a cigarette in your hand makes you feel more at ease, think of other ways to feel more relaxed. You could try keeping a 'stress ball' in your hand, listening to music, taking up a hobby or doing something active, such as going for a walk. Most importantly, think about the reasons you feel stressed. Try to find ways to deal with them or discuss it with your doctor.
- If you enjoy smoking, try to think of the benefits of quitting (see below) and the things you might like to do instead.
- Many people smoke to reduce their appetite and think that they may gain weight if they quit. If you are worried about weight gain, consider increasing your physical activity and talk to your Accredited Practising Dietitian about how to minimise weight gain.

The benefits of not smoking

Quitting can:

- Reduce your risk of heart attack, stroke and cardiovascular disease.
- Reduce your risk of cancer.
- Reduce your risk of developing problems with your blood vessels and the risk of blood clots.
- Reduce your risk of developing cataracts and severe eye disease (retinopathy and maculopathy).
- Improve your sense of taste.
- Ease coughing.
- Improve your ability to participate in and enjoy physical activity (without feeling breathless).
- Rid you and your clothes of the smell of tobacco smoke.
- Give you a feeling of control and independence without having to rely on cigarettes to feel at ease.
- Save you money and/or allow you to spend it on other things you enjoy.

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For information, support and advice contact:

Quitline

Call the Quitline on 137 848 for a free Quit Pack OR

- Speak to a Quitline advisor for information and support OR
- Visit their website www.quit.org.au

Your diabetes health care team

- Talk to your GP or diabetes specialist about medications such as nicotine patches or other anti-smoking medications.

Your State or Territory Diabetes Organisation

- Phone your State or Territory Diabetes Organisation on 1300 136 588 or visit their website www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/links_library/index.html

For more information about smoking and diabetes, go to:

- **Diabetes UK:** www.diabetes.org.uk
- **International Diabetes Federation:** www.idf.org/home/index.cfm
- **World Health Organisation:** www.who.int/tobacco/en/

Type 'smoking and diabetes' in the search window.

Acknowledgement: **Quit Victoria** has given valuable input to this information sheet.

Would you like to join Australia's leading diabetes organisation?

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- > Dietary services
- > Free magazines
- > Support groups
- > Educational literature
- > Children's services

For more information phone **1300 136 588**
or got to our website www.diabetesaustralia.com.au/links_library/index.html

The design, content and production of this diabetes information sheet has been undertaken by the eight State and Territory member organisations of Diabetes Australia Ltd listed below:

- > Diabetes Australia – NSW
- > Diabetes Australia – Queensland
- > Diabetes ACT
- > Diabetes SA
- > Diabetes WA
- > Healthy Living NT
- > Diabetes Australia – Victoria
- > Diabetes Australia – Tasmania

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