

Becoming Smoke Free: Healthy Me, Healthy Baby



Why quit?

Pregnancy comes with many things to think about: getting enough rest, taking your vitamins, regular physical activity. There's lots of planning—around your house, at work, and in your family—to get ready for your baby. Quitting smoking may seem like just too much to do on top of everything else.

Do you know what happens to your baby when you smoke?

When you smoke your baby gets less oxygen. Smoking during pregnancy increases the risk that your baby could be born too small, could have serious health problems and/or could die in infancy. Quitting smoking at any time will reduce these risks, but the earlier you can quit the lower the risks for your baby. *Quitting now benefits both you and your baby.*

Getting ready to get ready to quit

Think about what you like about smoking. What don't you like? Making a list can help you weigh your options. When the list of what you don't like is longer than what you do like, it's time to quit.

Even before you quit, you can take a number of steps to get ready to be smoke free. Take a look at the ideas below, or come up with your own steps to make the change:

- **Pick a quit date** and use the time between now and then to get ready.
- **Pay attention to what's going on each time you smoke:** check in with yourself when you reach for a cigarette. Think about what's happening at the moment, how you are feeling, and what need you are meeting by smoking. Knowing your triggers (the situations in which you are most likely to smoke) will help you plan to avoid them or find ways to cope with them without smoking.
- **Gradually cut down on the number of cigarettes you smoke** each day – but be careful not to inhale more deeply to make up for it.
- **Practice being a non-smoker.** Set aside blocks of time when you will not smoke. For example, do not smoke between noon and 6 pm every day. Cravings will pass, whether you smoke or not. Give yourself a chance to practice how you will get through a craving without smoking.

- **Practice the four D's** to get through a craving:
 1. **Delay** a little while before giving in to a craving.
 2. **Drink** water instead of lighting up immediately.
 3. **Distract** yourself by thinking about your reasons for quitting or doing something different.
 4. **Deep breathing** - take at least four deep belly breaths breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- **Get support.** Identify who can be helpful during this change and let them know you are quitting smoking. If your partner smokes, agree to keep a smoke-free zone in the house and around the baby. If you smoke or have recently quit, the Early Start Specialist at your facility can provide you with support for a healthy pregnancy.

Once you quit

Know what to expect. Giving up smoking can be a big change in your life. The worst cravings will be over in a couple of days but you may feel withdrawal symptoms for several weeks.

- **Get rid of all your tobacco products,** ashtrays, lighters, and matches.
- **Plan healthy, smoke-free things to do,** especially for those first few days. Go to the movies, go swimming, walk around a smoke-free mall, and spend time with non-smoking family or friends.

- **Take a walk break instead of a smoke break.** Even mild exercise can reduce cravings, clear your mind, burn calories and help you stay in shape.
- **Make your home a smoke-free zone.** Ask others not to smoke around you or the baby. Living with people who smoke is associated with a higher chance of you smoking again. Encourage your family members at home who do smoke to quit—for you, for your family, and for your baby.
- **Stock a survival kit with carrot sticks or celery, sugarless gum or candy to chew on, toothpicks or straws to hold, and your list of reasons for quitting.**
- **Congratulate and reward yourself.** Use a bit of the money you haven't spent on cigarettes on a treat for yourself. You deserve it. And take care of yourself: include plenty of fruits and vegetables in your diet and try to rest when you are tired.
- Your breast milk is healthier for your baby.
- The risk of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome), also known as crib death, is lower.
- There's less risk that your baby will develop allergies or get coughs and colds.
- You have more chance of a long and healthy life with your family
- **Keep a survival kit in your car.** Include sugar-free gum or hard candy, your list of reasons you are smoke free, an inspirational quote, etc.
- **Enforce the smoke-free rule in your home.** Secondhand smoke can harm your baby's health.
- **If you are feeling like having a cigarette, check in with yourself.** What is going on around you? What do you need? Are you hungry, angry, tired or bored? How can you meet that need without smoking?
- **Nicotine replacement therapy is not usually recommended** during pregnancy or while breastfeeding. Talk to your provider about potential treatment options during pregnancy or while breastfeeding.

Staying smoke free after the baby comes

Be prepared: you are going to be tempted. Once you are home with your baby it can be easy to slip back into old patterns. Those triggers you identified as danger situations when you were preparing to quit have not gone away. Be ready to deal with them and stay on track.

- **Keep your list of reasons for quitting handy.** For example, when you don't smoke:

This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor.

If you slip

Slipping and having a cigarette does not mean that you have failed. In fact, slips can be pretty informative. Be curious about why you slipped. Did you uncover a new trigger? Should you pay more attention to an old one? How can you avoid a slip in the future?

Quitting tobacco is a process and many people try several times before becoming smoke free for good. If you are having difficulty staying smoke free, realize you are not alone. Talk with your doctor about getting support. Your health and the health of your baby are worth it.

Other resources

- **My Doctor Online:** Visit the Staying Healthy section on your doctor's home page on kp.org/mydoctor and find planning and support tools to help you quit tobacco.
- **Kaiser Permanente Wellness Coaching:** Our personal coaches can help you create – and stick with – a plan to help you quit tobacco with counseling, support and medical therapy. Make the first move by calling 1-866-251-4514 (toll free), 6 a.m. to midnight daily, to schedule your free coaching appointment.
- Visit kp.org/quitsmoking for more tips on how to quit.
- Visit kp.org/nutrition for tips on healthy eating.
- Contact your **Kaiser Permanente Health Education Center** to learn more about Kaiser Permanente's quit smoking programs.
- Call the California Smoker's Helpline at **1-800-No-BUTTS** for free and effective counseling during pregnancy.
- Your health and your pregnancy can be seriously affected by violence or abuse. If you are hit, hurt or threatened by a partner or spouse, there is help. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 or visit ndvh.org.