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### Cigarette smoking

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# **CIGARETTE SMOKING**

*Contributed by Diana Williams*

## **Did you know?**

- Smoking is the leading cause of death in the U.S. each year, killing more than 430,000 Americans. It is also the most preventable.
- The nicotine in cigarettes is a powerfully addictive drug. That is why many smokers continue despite the health risks.

## **Reasons to quit:**

- You will live longer and live better!
- Quitting will lower your chance of having a heart attack, stroke, or cancer.
- The people you live with, especially your children, will be healthier.
- You will have extra money to spend on things other than cigarettes.
- If you are pregnant, quitting smoking will improve your chances of having a healthy baby.

## **Five Keys for Quitting:**

- **Get ready.** Making the decision to quit smoking and having motivation is more than half the battle.
- **Get support.** It is very helpful to get the support of other people, whether they are ex-smokers, friends, family members, co-workers, and/or your doctor. Also, several internet websites where people trying to quit can support each other have been proven to be very effective. One example is: [www.QuitSmokingSupport.com](http://www.QuitSmokingSupport.com)
- **Learn new skills and behaviors.** It is important to keep busy and active, so you can distract yourself from the urges to smoke. It is also important to find healthy ways to relax, such as exercising, taking a hot bath, taking deep breaths every time you get the urge to smoke.
- **Get medication and use it correctly.** Take advantage of the many new medications available today that can help you stop smoking and lessen the urge to smoke. Some examples are the nicotine patch and nicotine inhaler. There are several others as well—talk with your doctor to get a prescription.
- **Be prepared for relapse or difficult situations.** Most relapses occur within the first 3 months after quitting. Don't be discouraged if you start smoking again. Many people try at least 2 or 3 times before they are able to permanently quit. You can do it!