

THE GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT QUIT FOR HEALTH AND BREATHE EASIER



OVERVIEW

Each year VA observes the Great American Smokeout on the third Thursday of November. Every year, thousands of Veterans participate by quitting smoking. VA encourages Veterans like you to make a quit plan, for your health, your family, and your life.

BENEFITS OF QUITTING

The benefits of quitting smoking are immediate and last a lifetime:

- **20 minutes after quitting**, your blood pressure drops and the circulation in your hands and feet improves.
- **12 hours after quitting**, the carbon monoxide level in your blood returns to normal.
- **2 days after quitting**, your taste and smell senses improve.
- **2 weeks to 3 months after quitting**, your heart attack risk drops and your lung function improves.
- **1 to 9 months after quitting**, your coughing and shortness of breath decrease.
- **1 year after quitting**, your added risk of heart disease is half that of a smoker's.
- **5 to 15 years after quitting**, your risk of stroke is now equal to a non-smoker's.
- **10 years after quitting**, if you are an average smoker (one pack a day) your lung cancer death rate drops by almost half. Risk of cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney, and pancreas decreases.
- **15 years after quitting**, your added risk of heart disease is the same as a non-smoker's.

START YOUR JOURNEY TO QUIT

No matter how long you have been smoking, it is never too late to quit! Even if you have tried to quit unsuccessfully before, keep trying. Three million Americans successfully quit smoking every year, and you can be one of them. **START** your journey today:

- **Set** a quit date.
- **Tell** your family and friends so they can offer support and help you remember why quitting is so important.
- **Anticipate** and plan for challenges.
- **Remove** all cigarettes, lighters, and ashtrays from your home, car, and workspace.
- **Talk** to your doctor, he/she can counsel you and prescribe medication that can help. Together smoking cessation medicines and counseling offer you the best chance to quit, and stay quit. Click here, to find a VA facility near you or call toll-free 1-877-222-8387.

VA has other resources available to help:

- Sign up today for **SmokefreeVET**, a free text messaging service that offers on-to-go support when you need it most. Visit <http://smokefree.gov/vet> or text the word VET to 47848.
- Call the VA's Tobacco **Quitline—1-855-QUIT-VET (1-855-784-8838)** to speak with a smoking cessation counselor. Counselors will help you develop a quit plan and strategies to avoid relapsing and provide individualized counseling.

Visit www.publichealth.va.gov/smoking/ for tips and resources to help you quit.

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