

## Connecting Thread

# Commit to Quit: Stopping Smoking

### BACKGROUND

Quitting smoking is one of the most important things a person with diabetes can do to prevent complications. People with diabetes who smoke are at higher risk of heart disease, kidney disease, vision problems, nerve damage, and other complications than those people with diabetes who do not smoke. People who smoke and do not have type 2 diabetes are at higher risk of developing the disease.

Smoking affects a person's organs, nerves, blood vessels, and tissues. It also makes it harder for the body to maintain blood sugar levels. Smoking increases levels of other hormones that make insulin not work as well as it should. People with diabetes who smoke have higher blood sugar and a harder time keeping insulin levels in check.

According to the American Cancer Society, many people start smoking in their teenage years, and the addiction to nicotine (the main ingredient in cigarettes) can make it very hard to quit.

Smoking cessation programs are a critical tool for people with diabetes to quit smoking and improve their overall health. People who are ready to quit smoking can get free support, coaching, information, and referral to local services by calling 800-QUITNOW (800-784-8669) or visiting [www.Smokefree.Gov](http://www.Smokefree.Gov).

## Electronic Cigarettes

The use of electronic cigarettes—called vaping—has increased in recent years. These products are also called e-cigs, vapes, e-hookahs, vape pens, and electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS).

What to know about vaping:

- E-cigarettes can potentially help adult smokers who are not pregnant if used as a complete substitute for regular cigarettes and other smoked tobacco products.
- E-cigarettes are not safe for adolescents, young adults, pregnant women, or adults who do not currently use tobacco products.
- E-cigarettes have the potential to help some people, but harm others. Scientists still have a lot to learn about whether e-cigarettes can help people quit smoking.
- If you've never smoked or used other tobacco products or e-cigarettes, don't start.

Learn more on CDC's [Electronic Cigarettes](#) website.

### ☆ KEY POINTS

- 1. It is very important for people with diabetes who smoke to try to quit.** Quitting is the best way to prevent complications, such as heart or kidney disease.
- 2. Smoking is an addiction, and quitting is hard.** Many people will try more than once to quit before they stop for good. An ongoing smoking cessation program can help people quit. It can also help them accept their diagnosis, cope with their emotions, overcome their self-doubt, manage their stress, and solve problems.

## ☆ KEY POINTS (CONTINUED)

3. **Stress and depression can make it hard to quit.** People who have stopped smoking may start smoking again to cope with stress and depression. It is important to learn healthy coping strategies and get help for depression. Participating in diabetes self-management education and support services can be a great way to learn and practice coping skills. See the Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support Services Connecting Thread for more information.
4. **People who are trying to stop smoking need support from family, friends, and their health care team.** Talking to a health care provider about quitting is a good place to start. It is also important for people who smoke to talk to their family members about how they can help support these efforts.

## 📋 SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Can you identify places or situations that make you want to smoke?
- Have you tried quitting smoking before?
  - What was a challenge you faced while trying to quit?
- Besides addiction or habit, what is a reason that you smoke?
- What are some things you believe cigarettes help you cope with?
- If you were to begin quitting smoking tomorrow, who would support you?

## 🔄 SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

### **Write a letter to your loved ones, asking them to help you quit smoking and telling them what they can do to support you.**

The goal of this activity is to get participants thinking about the support system they'll need if they choose to quit smoking and how they expect to rely on their loved ones. This activity will help participants think about the type of encouragement and support they want from people in their lives—to help them quit smoking or to help with the daily challenges of living with diabetes.

### **Write down 3 to 5 smoking “trigger” situations and what you can do in those situations instead of smoking.**

The goal of this activity is to identify the times that participants typically smoke and help them think about why they smoke during those times. Examples include on their lunch break or after a stressful day at work. This activity will help participants think about other ways they can cope or spend time instead of smoking.

Ask participants to share their triggers and their new solutions with the group.

## RESOURCES

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):**

CDC offers a range of resources to help people quit smoking and learn how smoking affects the health of people with diabetes. These resources include:

- [QuitSTART App](#)
- [Quit Smoking](#)
- [Smoking and Diabetes](#)
- [Yvonne on Smoking](#) (audio clip)

The **National Cancer Institute's (NCI)** [Smokefree.Gov](#) website offers a range of free tools and resources to help people quit smoking, including:

- [Every Try Counts Campaign](#)
- [Pick Your Path to Quit Tool](#)
- [Smokefree TXT](#) (text messaging program)

The **US Food and Drug Administration's (FDA)** [Want to Quit Smoking? FDA-Approved Products Can Help](#) website offers information about smoking cessation products regulated through FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research.

## REFERENCES

American Cancer Society. (2015). Why people start smoking and why it is hard to stop. [www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/tobacco-and-cancer/why-people-start-using-tobacco.html](http://www.cancer.org/cancer/cancer-causes/tobacco-and-cancer/why-people-start-using-tobacco.html)

American Diabetes Association. (2004). Smoking and diabetes. *Diabetes Care*, 27 (S1), S74–S75.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018). Smoking and diabetes. [www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/diseases/diabetes.html](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/diseases/diabetes.html)

Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and Maxwell School of Syracuse University. (2013). Quit and stay quit Monday: Group counseling curriculum. [www.iquitmonday.org/](http://www.iquitmonday.org/)

Sliwinska-Mosson, M., & Milnerowicz, H. (2017). The impact of smoking on the development of diabetes and its complications. *Diabetes and Vascular Disease Research*, 265–276.