WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SMOKING
Advice From Surgeon General’s Reports on Smoking and Health

QUITTING WILL SAVE LIVES AND IMPROVE HEALTH
Smoking remains the leading preventable cause of death and disease in the United States. Recent studies show that smokers who talk to a clinician about how to quit dramatically increase their chances of quitting successfully. Quitting smoking is the most important step you can take to improve your health. Your doctor can help you quit.

TIPS FOR QUITTING
If you are a smoker who wants to quit:
- Set a quit date, ideally within two weeks.
- Remove tobacco products from your home, car, and workplace.
- Resolve not to smoke at all—not even one puff.
- Avoid drinking while you’re quitting cigarettes. Drinking alcohol can trigger cravings for a cigarette.
- Anticipate challenges, such as nicotine withdrawal, particularly during the critical first few weeks.
- Ask others not to smoke around you. Allowing them to smoke around you can make it harder for you to quit.
- Identify reasons for quitting and benefits of quitting.

Medication and counseling help smokers quit:
- Physicians can recommend counseling or coaching in combination with over-the-counter nicotine patches, gum, or lozenges or with FDA-approved medications, unless there are other health concerns about those medications.
- Medication and counseling in combination result in much higher quit rates than medication alone.
- Counseling and coaching are available through community, employer, insurance, and hospital/medical practice cessation programs or through quitline services (1-800-QUIT-NOW).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM SURGEON GENERAL’S REPORTS ON SMOKING AND HEALTH
1. There is no safe level of exposure to tobacco smoke. Any exposure to tobacco smoke—even an occasional cigarette or exposure to secondhand smoke—is harmful.
2. Damage from tobacco smoke is immediate. Tobacco smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals and chemical compounds that reach your lungs every time you inhale. Your blood then carries the poisons to all parts of your body. These poisons damage DNA, which can lead to cancer; damage blood vessels and cause clotting, which can cause heart attacks and strokes; and damage the lungs, which can cause asthma attacks, emphysema, and chronic bronchitis.
3. Smoking longer means more damage. Both the risk and the severity of many diseases caused by smoking are directly related to how long the smoker has smoked and the number of cigarettes smoked per day.
4. Cigarettes are designed for addiction. The design and contents of tobacco products make them more attractive and addictive than ever before. Nicotine addiction keeps people smoking even when they want to quit.
5. Even low levels of exposure, including exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke, are dangerous. You don’t have to be a heavy smoker or a long-time smoker to get a smoking-related disease or have a heart attack or stroke triggered by smoke.
6. There is no safe cigarette.

Resources to help smokers quit:
- Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669), the national access number to state-based quitline services.

YOU CAN QUIT AND YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER CAN HELP
Most people find a combination of resources works best. Many smokers do not quit on their first attempt. Many need several tries to successfully quit. But the benefits are well worth it. Keep trying.