

# Believe in Your Ability to Quit



The University of Rochester Medical Center's commitment to help Rochester become America's healthiest community by 2020

## Do I really need to quit smoking?

Yes! Cigarette smoking accounts for nearly one-third of all cancer deaths in the United States each year and yet it is the most preventable cause of death in our country.

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death and smoking is the most common risk factor for the development of lung cancer. Smoking is also linked to cancers of the esophagus, larynx, kidney, pancreas and cervix. It also increases the risk of chronic lung disease and heart disease.

## What are the benefits of quitting?

### Short term:

- Almost immediately, your circulation will begin to improve and the carbon monoxide level in your blood will begin to decline
- Your pulse and blood pressure will begin to return to normal
- Your sense of taste and smell will return within a couple of days

### Long term:

- Within ten or fifteen years, your risk of premature death is close to that of a person who never smoked
- Your risk of dying from lung cancer is 50 percent less that if you had continued to smoke

## At what age is it beneficial to quit?

Any age! Some older adults may not perceive the benefits of quitting but, for example, if you quit before age 50, you reduce the risk of dying in the next 16 years by 50%. By age 64, your chance of dying is close to that of someone who has never smoked. Older adults who quit also reduce the risk of developing infections such as pneumonia and coronary heart disease.

## What difficulties might I have when I quit?

Common effects of quitting are people temporarily feel anxious, irritable, hungry, more tired, and have difficulty sleeping. You might also have a hard time concentrating and might experience weight gain – usually less than 10 pounds. These changes do go away and you are healthier in the long run.

## What help can I get to quit?

### Nicotine Replacement Therapy:

Nicotine replacement products deliver small, steady doses of nicotine, which helps to relieve withdrawal symptoms. Using a combination of nicotine replacement patches, gum, nasal spray and inhalers appears to be most effective.

### Other Smoking Cessation Aids:

Bupropion, a prescription antidepressant marketed as Zyban, can also help reduce withdrawal symptoms and the urge to smoke.

### Smoking Cessation Programs:

The support of nonsmokers has proven helpful to stop smoking. A list of stop-smoking support groups in your area is available through the **New York State Quit Line 1-888-609-6292** or the **Smoking Research Program of the James P. Wilmot Cancer Center 1-888-222-3993**.

## What if I slip up and smoke a cigarette?

One cigarette is not a relapse so don't give up. Many smokers find it may take 2-3 attempts to finally quit. Relapse is most common in the first few weeks or months but if you can make it 3 months, you have a great chance at remaining cigarette free for the rest of your life.