



Quitting Smoking

November 2003

[Why Should Cigarette Smokers Think About Quitting?](#)

[What Are Some Tips For Smokers Who Decide To Quit?](#)

[What About Smokers Who Quit Time And Time Again?](#)

[What About Nicotine Replacement Therapy?](#)

[Can Nicotine Chewing Gum Help?](#)

[How Much Nicotine Gum Do Quitters Chew?](#)

[Can the Nicotine Patch Help?](#)

[Are Those Nicotine Replacement Products Just As Bad As Smoking Cigarettes?](#)

[Are There Other Nicotine Replacement Products?](#)

[What's a Good Way to Help a Cigarette Smoker Quit?](#)

[What Do Former Smokers Say About The Benefits Of Quitting?](#)

WHY SHOULD CIGARETTE SMOKERS THINK ABOUT QUITTING?

One in three smokers dies early because of their smoking. They die of heart disease, stroke, cancer and emphysema. At one time smoking seemed "cool," but it has become less and less desirable.

What's more, research shows that secondhand smoke, the smoke from other people's cigarettes, can harm the health of nonsmokers. Breathing in another person's smoke can cause many breathing problems in children and cancer and heart disease in adults.

The trend now is for public places and work places to go smoke-free. This should help smokers make the move to quit and keep everyone's lungs healthier.

Cigarettes are so much a part of the American scene that many people think of them as "normal." They are easy to buy and inexpensive compared to other drugs.

But cigarettes aren't normal. They are very addictive and cause sickness and death.

They are illegal to use in many places and it is illegal for minors to buy them in most parts of the U.S.

WHAT ARE SOME TIPS FOR SMOKERS WHO DECIDE TO QUIT?

Join a stop-smoking program like Freedom From Smoking® from the American Lung Association(ALA). The Program gives Lots of ideas on how to quit and stay quit. Groups are a way to meet other people who want to stop smoking.

Look into the different kinds of self-help options available to smokers. These include [Freedom From Smoking®](#) guidebooks, videotapes and audiotapes. All of these materials are also available from the American Lung Association.

Pick a good time to quit. Don't try to quit when you're under a lot of stress or around a holiday.

Be aware that smokers have different experiences when they quit. They may feel sleepy or very excited, lightheaded, nervous or irritable. Or they might crave tobacco or sweets or have headaches.

Be sure to get some exercise every day. For example, walking is a great way to reduce the stress of quitting. Exercise is a big boost toward feeling better, improving spirits, and keeping trim.

Get plenty of sleep, eat a balanced diet and drink lots of water.

Ask family, friends and co-workers to help. Having someone to take a walk with or just listen can give a needed boost.

WHAT ABOUT SMOKERS WHO QUIT TIME AND TIME AGAIN?

Most smokers need to "practice" quitting several times before they make it for good. The best advice is to keep trying! Practice helps smokers plan what to do the next time they get an urge to smoke.

Quitting smoking may seem almost impossible, but it can be done. Don't give up!

More than 45.7 million Americans have quit. Many of them tried several times before they were able to quit. They made it and quit for good. Other smokers can, too.

WHAT ABOUT NICOTINE REPLACEMENT THERAPY? DOES IT HELP?

Quitting smoking is a two-step process that includes:

- 1) overcoming the physical addiction to nicotine, and
- 2) breaking the smoking habit

Nicotine replacement therapy helps take care of the nicotine addiction so that the smoker can work on breaking the habit. Research has shown that smokers who use some form of nicotine replacement therapy and participate in a behavior change program like *Freedom From Smoking*® can double their chances of quitting for good.

These products work best for people who are addicted to nicotine and are really trying to quit. Smokers can now obtain these nicotine replacement products both with a doctor's prescription and over-the-counter. These products are designed to reduce cravings for cigarettes and relieve the withdrawal symptoms people experience while trying to quit smoking.

CAN NICOTINE CHEWING GUM HELP?

Nicotine chewing gum releases small amounts of nicotine into the body. This cuts down on withdrawal symptoms and makes it easier to break the smoking addiction. Nicotine gum is available over-the-counter and the recommended treatment period is 12 weeks.

HOW MUCH NICOTINE GUM DO QUITTERS CHEW?

Usually 10 to 15 pieces of gum a day. Package instructions explain how the gum is to be chewed. Drinks such as coffee or soda should be avoided before, during and after use of the gum.

CAN THE NICOTINE PATCH HELP?

The nicotine patch helps relieve nicotine withdrawal symptoms by providing a steady dosage of nicotine throughout the day. It reduces the craving or urge to smoke because it replaces the nicotine the smoker was used to getting from cigarettes.

Each day, a new patch is applied to the upper body. One patch is removed at night, lowering the level of nicotine in the bloodstream to give the body a rest; other brands are worn at night as well. These nicotine patches are now available over-the-counter and work best when used along with a behavioral change program like *Freedom From Smoking*® from the American Lung Association. Patches are available in either 6-week or 10-week treatment periods.

ARE THESE NICOTINE REPLACEMENT PRODUCTS JUST AS BAD AS SMOKING

CIGARETTES?

No, they do not have all the tars and poisonous gases that are found in cigarettes. Furthermore, they provide less nicotine than a smoker gets from cigarettes.

These products should not be used by pregnant or nursing women. People with other medical conditions should check with their doctor before using any nicotine replacement product.

Most important is that smokers quit completely before starting to use these products. They should not smoke any cigarettes while using the patch.

ARE THERE OTHER NICOTINE REPLACEMENT PRODUCTS?

Yes. There is an inhaler and a nasal spray that are available by prescription. A doctor should be contacted to discuss the use of these products and whether they are right for you. There is also a non-nicotine pill, bupropion hydrochloride or Zyban®, that was approved in 1997 to help smokers quit. The drug, only available by prescription, is also sold as an antidepressant under the name Wellbutrin®.

WHAT'S A GOOD WAY TO HELP A CIGARETTE SMOKER QUIT?

The first move has to come from the smoker. People who really want to quit smoking stand a better chance of sticking to their decision. Letting a person know you care and that you are "there for them" can be a big help.

Ask a smoker, "How can I help?" If the person can't come up with ideas right away, wait until you get some clues. Most smokers would like to be free of cigarettes.

WHAT DO FORMER SMOKERS SAY ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF QUITTING?

People who quit smoking are proud of themselves for breaking the addiction. By quitting, smokers get many health benefits. They cut down on their risk of having lung disease, a heart attack or getting cancer.

Former smokers are glad to be rid of cigarette stains on their fingers, hacking coughs and the smell of stale cigarette smoke on their clothing.

Other pleasing "side effects" of quitting are an improved sense of smell and taste.

Stopping smoking as early as possible is important, but cessation at any age provides meaningful life extensions.

Life expectancy among smokers who quit at age 35 exceeded that of continuing smokers by 6.9 to 8.5 years for men and 6.1 to 7.7 years for women. Smokers who

quit at younger ages realize greater life extensions. However, even those who quit much later in life gained some benefits: among smokers who quit at age 55 years, men gained 1.4 to 2.0 year of life, and women gained 2.7 to 3.7 years.

The American Lung Association® now offers *Freedom From Smoking® Online* - a 24 hour smoking cessation support program on the web! Visit www.ffsonline.org and stop smoking today!

Your local American Lung Association® can help with programs for smokers and for their families and friends. Give your local Lung Association a call today at 1-800-LUNG-USA. Ask about self-help guides, audiotapes, videotapes and group clinics.



Benefits

When smokers quit, within twenty minutes of smoking that last cigarette the body begins a series of changes.

At 20 minutes after quitting:

- blood pressure decreases
- pulse rate drops
- body temperature of hands and feet increases

At 8 hours:

- carbon monoxide level in blood drops to normal
- oxygen level in blood increases to normal

At 24 hours:

- chance of a heart attack decreases

At 48 hours:

- nerve endings start regrowing
- ability to smell and taste is enhanced

The first year after quitting:

At 2 weeks to 3 months:

- circulation improves
- walking becomes easier
- lung function increases

1 to 9 months:

- coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, shortness of breath decreases

1 year:

- excess risk of coronary heart disease is decreased to half that of a smoker

Long-term Benefits of Quitting

At 5 years:

- from 5 to 15 years after quitting, stroke risk is reduced to that of people who

have never smoked.

At 10 years:

- risk of lung cancer drops to as little as one-half that of continuing smokers
- risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney, and pancreas decreases
- risk of ulcer decreases

At 15 years:

- risk of coronary heart disease is now similar to that of people who have never smoked
- risk of death returns to nearly the level of people who have never smoked

See also:

- www.ffsonline.org

You and Your Baby

[Why Do You Smoke?](#)

[How Does Smoking Effect Your Baby's Health?](#)

[Learning How To Be A Non-Smoker](#)

[Avoid Smoking Situations](#)

[Your Quit Day](#)

For the complete guide, call 1-800-LUNGUSA



...Just reading this page is your first big step toward quitting!

CONGRATULATE YOURSELF!

You've decided to quit smoking. Quitting now that you're going to have a baby is a smart idea.

You probably have heard all kinds of things about how smoking is bad for you, and bad for your baby. It's true.

Smoking is very dangerous to unborn babies. These things happen more often to babies whose mothers smoked when they were pregnant:

- Being born too soon or too small
- Crib death ([Sudden Infant Death Syndrome or SIDS](#))
- Colds, other lung problems and ear infections

Maybe you've tried to quit smoking before. Lots of people have to try more than once before they can stick with it. But now that you have a baby coming, this time when you quit, it's going to be the real thing. What you need is an attitude that says "this time I mean it!", and a plan that works for you.

It's never too late to quit smoking. Sure it's better if you can stop early in pregnancy, and better yet if you can stop before you get pregnant. But if you didn't, don't blame yourself – just deal with it now.

Here's what happens soon after you quit smoking:

- More nutrition will go to your baby to help it grow.
- Your chances of having a healthy baby will increase, and the baby will be more

likely to have a healthy childhood.

- You'll have more energy and feel less stressed.
- You'll breathe easier and be able to keep up with your active, healthy baby.
- Over time, your body will repair itself, and you'll reduce your risk of cancer and other diseases. You'll be around for a long time to be a good mother.

WHY DO YOU SMOKE?

Before you can quit, you have to understand why you smoke in the first place. Then you can figure out how to handle your urge to smoke. Here are some reasons:

"It gives me a boost."

Do you feel like smoking gives you extra energy and keeps you going? If so, you need other things to do that give you that boost.

"I need something to do with my hands."

You don't have to be smoking to do something with your hands: cook, sew, write a letter, munch on a carrot or celery stick.

"I like it."

Some people get a lot of pleasure out of smoking. You can learn to get the same pleasure out of other physical activities that are safe to do while you're pregnant.

"It's part of my routine."

If you're smoking because it's something you always do at certain times, quitting is going to be easier than you think. You need to change your routines.

"I can't quit."

Nicotine is very addictive, and people do get hooked. But like other addictive things, including drugs and alcohol, you can kick the habit when you're ready.

When Do You Smoke?

Figure out what kinds of situations make you light up. These are your smoking triggers. Some of the most common ones are:

- Other people smoking
- Driving
- After eating
- Watching TV
- After sex
- Talking on the phone
- When the kids start crying or yelling
- Feeling stressed at work or at home

Think about what your smoking triggers are, and write them down. Some of them are probably related to being pregnant. It's normal to be worried about giving birth and being a mother. But smoking's not going to help you handle it, and quitting is the best thing you can

do for your baby.

What About Gaining Weight?

It's true that most people gain a few pounds when they quit smoking. A woman needs to gain weight during pregnancy, so as long as you stay away from junk foods and sweets, your weight gain is okay. Even if you put on a little more than you need, you can lose it after the baby is born. Regular exercise helps control weight, and walking is an ideal exercise while you're pregnant and after the baby is born.

Your Reasons for Quitting

It's really important to know exactly why you want to quit. The best thing is to make a list of your reasons, so you can look at it when you have the urge to smoke. This list can help you resist. Some common reasons for quitting:

- For my health and my family's health
- To give my baby a healthy start
- To save money
- So I won't smell of cigarettes and won't have yellow teeth
- So I can be in control of my body and my life

HOW DOES SMOKING AFFECT YOUR BABY'S HEALTH?

When you smoke, you breathe in many poisons that get in your blood and keep your baby from getting the food and oxygen it needs to grow. The sooner you quit, the sooner you can stop passing on all these poisons to your baby. Think about this every time you start to light a cigarette. Smokers are more likely to:

- Lose the baby (miscarriage)
- Have the baby too soon
- Have trouble giving birth
- Have a baby that's stillborn or too small
- Have a baby that dies soon after birth
- Have a baby that gets sick a lot

LEARNING HOW TO BE A NON-SMOKER

Use what you have learned about why and when you smoke to make changes in your habits that make it easier to quit. You can't avoid all your smoking triggers, but you can resist them, especially if you know what to do when you have the urge to light up.

The Four D's

Use the Four D's any time you crave a cigarette. They are simple to do. And you can use them no matter where you are.

Drink water

Drinking water may distract you, and it flushes the nicotine out of your body.

Delay

Wait a few minutes, and the urge for a smoke may pass.

Deep breathe

Take five deep breaths and relax for a few minutes. You may not want a cigarette as much anymore.

Do something else

- Spend more time with people who don't smoke.
- Do something you enjoy: call a friend, see a movie, rent a video, go window shopping.
- Plan ahead if you're going somewhere with other smokers. Think about how great you'll look without a cigarette.
- Hold a straw if you need something in your hand.
- Chew gum or eat a low-cal snack.
- Exercise! When you're pregnant, the best exercise is walking 15 minutes every day. Start slow, then get faster.
- Punch a pillow if you're in a bad mood.
- Sew, or knit or crochet if you know how. If you don't, get your mom or a friend to teach you. You can make baby clothes.

AVOID SMOKING SITUATIONS

Staying away from other people who smoke can be hard, especially if there are smokers in your household. If that's the problem, tell them you're trying to quit because of the baby and ask for their help. See if you can get them not to smoke around you. If they don't cooperate, go somewhere else when they light up. Maybe you can go in your own room, or outside for a walk.

You probably have friends who smoke, and you may have to stay away from them for a little while. Explain why, so you don't lose a friend. They might surprise you by telling you they think what you're doing is good. A friend might even decide to quit with you.

Going to parties, bars and other places where people smoke is also a trap. Try doing other things for a few weeks while you're quitting. At work, take a walk instead of a coffee break. Any place that does not allow smoking is a good place for you!

Change Your Thinking

Use positive thinking to get pumped about quitting.

Instead of thinking: *I'll never be able to quit.*

Think: *I can do it if I take it one day at a time. I know it's going to get easier if I just hang in there.*

Instead of thinking: *I love sitting around with a cigarette and coffee at break time. I can't give it up.*

Think: *I'll get my break time friends to go for a walk with me. They'll help me if I tell them much I need their support.*

YOUR QUIT DAY

Pick a day to quit. Then don't make excuses for putting it off. You're as ready as you'll ever be, so go for it.

Get rid of all your cigarettes and everything that goes with them: matches, lighters, ashtrays.

Tell everybody what day you're going to quit, and ask for their help.

Figure out how much money you'll save by not buying cigarettes. Plan to put that money away every day, and use it to give yourself a treat, or to get something for the baby.

Whenever you want a cigarette, use the "[Four Ds](#)".

The key to success is planning how to deal with your cravings before they hit.

Ask for the version of 'Freedom From Smoking® for You and Your Baby'

For a complete copy of 'Freedom From Smoking® for You and Your Baby,' contact your local lung association at 1-800-LUNGUSA.

Provided by an educational grant from the Cook County Department of Public Health

Women and Smoking Fact Sheet

June 2007

Cigarette smoking was rare among women in the early 20th century and became prevalent among women after it did among men. In 2005, 20.3 million (18.1 percent) of women smoked in the United States.¹ Although fewer women smoke than men, the percentage difference between the two has continued to decrease year to year. Today, with a much closer gap between men's and women's smoking rates, women share a much larger burden of smoking-related diseases.

- Smoking is directly responsible for 90 percent of all lung cancer deaths in America each year. In 1987, lung cancer surpassed breast cancer as the leading cause of cancer deaths among women in the U.S.²
- Current female smokers aged 35 or older are 12 times more likely than nonsmoking females to die prematurely from lung cancer.³ In 2007, an estimated 70,880 women will die of lung and bronchus cancer.⁴
- Smoking is directly responsible for 80 percent of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) deaths in women each year.⁵ In 2003, 51.2 percent of all COPD deaths were in women. This is the third year in a row that women have outnumbered men in deaths attributable to COPD.⁶
- Current female smokers aged 35 or older are 10.5 times more likely than nonsmoking females to die from emphysema or chronic bronchitis otherwise known as COPD.⁷
- Annually, cigarette smoking kills an estimated 178,408 women in the United States.⁸
- Prevalence of current smoking in 2005 among adult female populations was highest among, non-Hispanic whites (21%), followed by non-Hispanic blacks (17%) and Hispanics (11%).⁹
- Women who smoke also have an increased risk for developing cancers of the oral cavity, pharynx, larynx (voice box), esophagus, pancreas, kidney, bladder, and uterine cervix.¹⁰
- Women who smoke double their risk for developing coronary heart disease.¹¹
- Postmenopausal women who smoke have lower bone density than women who never smoked. Women who smoke have an increased risk for hip fracture than never smokers. Cigarette smoking also causes skin wrinkling that could make smokers appear less attractive and prematurely old.¹²
- Women have been extensively targeted in tobacco marketing dominated by themes of an association between social desirability, independence, weight control and smoking messages conveyed through advertisements featuring slim, attractive, and athletic models.¹³
- Teenage girls often start to smoke to avoid weight gain and to identify themselves as independent and glamorous, which reflect images projected by tobacco ads. Social images can convince teens that being slightly overweight is worse than smoking. Cigarette advertising portrays cigarettes as causing slimness and implies that cigarette smoking suppresses appetite.¹⁴
- In 2005, 23.0 percent of high school girls were current smokers, meaning they smoked at least once in the 30 days preceding the survey.¹⁵

- In 2003, 10.7 percent of mothers smoked during pregnancy. It is estimated that only 25 percent of women quit smoking once they become pregnant.¹⁶
- Cigarette smoking during pregnancy can cause serious health problems for both mother and child, such as pregnancy complications, premature birth, low-birth-weight infants, stillbirth and infant death.¹⁷
- Mothers who smoke can pass nicotine to their children through breast milk. Cigarette smoking not only passes nicotine on to the fetus; it also prevents as much as 25 percent of oxygen from reaching the placenta. Smoking during pregnancy accounts for 20 to 30 percent of low-birth weight babies, up to 14 percent of preterm deliveries and about 10 percent of all infant deaths.¹⁸
- Additionally, infants are more likely to develop colds, bronchitis, and other respiratory diseases if secondhand smoke is present in the home or day care center. Maternal smoking has also been linked to asthma among infants and young children. The odds of developing asthma are twice as high among children whose mothers smoke more than 10 cigarettes a day.¹⁹
- Reducing frequency of smoking may not benefit the baby. A pregnant woman who reduces her smoking pattern or switches to lower tar cigarettes may inhale more deeply or take more puffs to get the same amount of nicotine as before.²⁰
- The most effective way to protect the fetus is to quit smoking. If a woman plans to conceive a child in the near future, quitting is essential. A woman who quits within the first three or four months of pregnancy can lower the chances of her baby being born premature or with health problems related to smoking.²¹
- Women who quit smoking greatly reduce their risk of developing smoking-related diseases and dying prematurely. In 2003, 48.9 percent of women smokers tried to quit smoking for at least one day.²²
Women who quit smoking relapse for different reasons than men. Stress, weight control, and negative emotions, lead to relapse among women.²³
- A recent study found among middle-aged smokers and former smokers, with mild or moderate chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, both breathed easier after quitting. After one year the women who quit smoking had 2 times more improvement in lung function compared with the men who quit.²⁴

For more information on tobacco, please review the Tobacco Morbidity and Mortality Trend Report and Lung Disease Data in the Data and Statistics section of our website at www.lungusa.org or call the American Lung Association at 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872).

Sources:

1. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. Tobacco Use Among Adults---U.S., 2005. Vol. 42(42); 1145-1145, Oct. 2006. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5542a1.htm>. Accessed on 4/19/07.
2. U.S Department of Health and Human Services. Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General, 2004.
3. Ibid.
4. American Cancer Society. Cancer Facts and Figures, 2007. Available at: Accessed on 6/5/07.
5. U.S Department of Health and Human Services. Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General, 2004.
6. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Health Statistics. Deaths Final Mortality Statistics, 2003.
7. U.S Department of Health and Human Services. Health Consequences of Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General, 2004.

8. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. Annual Smoking-Attributable Mortality, Years of Potential Life Lost, and Productivity Losses---United States, 1997-2001. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5425a1.htm>. Accessed on 4/18/07.
9. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vital and Health Statistics. Summary Health Statistics for U.S. Adults: National Health Interview Survey, 2005. Series 10, No. 232, December 2006.
10. U.S Department of Health and Human Services. Women and Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General, 2001.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Centers for Disease Control. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2005. Vol. 55(SS05); 1-108 (pg. 14).). Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss5505a1>. Accessed on 4/30/07.
16. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Division of Vital Statistics, 2003 unpublished data.
17. Ibid.
18. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Women and Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General, 2001.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. National Center for Health Statistics. Raw Data from the National Health Interview Survey, U.S., 2003. (Analysis by the American Lung Association Research and Program Services Division, Using SPSS and SUDAAN)
23. U.S Department of Health and Human Services. Women and Smoking: A Report of the Surgeon General, 2001.
24. John E. Connett, Robert P. Murray, A. Sonia Buist, Robert A. Wise, William C. Bailey, Paula G. Lindgren, and Gregory R. Owens, Changes in Smoking Status Affect Women More than Men: Results of the Lung Health Study, American Journal of Epidemiology 2003; 157: 973-979.

Smoking & Pregnancy



[There's Never Been A Better Time To Quit](#)

[Here are some questions that are often asked about smoking and pregnancy](#)

[How can the pregnant smoker get help in quitting](#)

THERE'S NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO QUIT

Smoking rates are going down among Americans. However, the smoking rates among women are going down more slowly than smoking rates among men. In fact, smoking among high school senior girls was the same in 2000 as in 1998.

When young women who smoke start to think about having children, they also need to think about quitting smoking. The best time to quit is when a woman is planning to get pregnant in the near future, or after she finds out that she is already pregnant. This will be better for her own health and for that of her baby.

Pregnancy is a great time to quit smoking and stay quit after the baby is born.

HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS THAT ARE OFTEN ASKED ABOUT SMOKING AND PREGNANCY:

Q: Don't some mothers smoke during pregnancy and have healthy babies?

A: They are the lucky ones! If a woman smokes during pregnancy she takes a big chance with her baby's health. There is a greater chance that she will lose the baby during pregnancy. The baby could also be born too early, before the lungs are ready, so he or she will have trouble breathing.

Why take a chance when there is so much to lose?

Q: Babies often weigh less when the mother smokes. Isn't it easier to deliver a small baby?

A: It is not always easier to deliver a low-birth weight baby. And a baby that weighs too little is often sick with lots of health problems. Smaller babies are more likely to need special care and stay longer in the hospital. Some may die either at birth or within the first year.

Q: Does cigarette smoke get through to the unborn baby?

A: Yes, when the mother smokes, so does the baby. Smokers take in poisons such

as nicotine and carbon monoxide (the same gas that comes out of a car's exhaust pipe). These poisons get into the placenta, which is the tissue that connects the mother and the baby before it is born. These poisons keep the unborn baby from getting the food and oxygen needed to grow.

Q: Will a woman gain extra weight if she quits smoking during pregnancy?

A: A woman needs to gain weight during pregnancy. An unborn baby depends on the mother to eat the right foods. So, if she stays away from junk foods and sweets, the mother's weight gain will be fine. And she needs to exercise. Her doctor can help her plan how to keep active; brisk walking is good for most women.

Even if a pregnant woman gains a few extra pounds, she can lose it after the baby's born. And speaking of how she looks, the woman can think about how smoking stains her teeth and fingers. It makes her clothes and her breath smell bad. And smoking may even add more skin wrinkles.

Q: How about cutting down on cigarettes rather than quitting for good?

A: The only way to really protect your unborn baby is to quit. Cutting down is better than doing nothing but it may not make things much better for the baby.

If a pregnant woman cuts down or switches to low-tar cigarettes, she must be careful not to inhale more deeply or take more puffs to get the same amount of nicotine as before.

Q: Does it matter when the pregnant woman quits smoking?

A: The best time to quit is when the woman thinks she will get pregnant in the near future. If she does quit, her baby will probably weigh the same as the baby of a woman who has never smoked. Or if she quits within the first three or four months of her pregnancy she can lower her baby's chance of being born too small and with lots of health problems.

Many women are able to quit during pregnancy. It is easier than other times when they tried to quit. They can quit now for their babies as well as for themselves.

If the woman feels sick in the first couple of months, cigarettes may taste bad, and so it is easier to quit.

Even if a woman quits at the end of her pregnancy, she can help her baby get more oxygen and have a better chance of making it. It's never too late to quit, but the earlier the better for both the mother and her baby!

Q: What about other people smoking around the pregnant woman?

A: New studies show that if a woman's partner smokes near her during her pregnancy, there are added risks. She has a greater chance of having a baby that weighs too little and may have health problems.

So, a pregnant woman should ask her partner, and other people as well, not to smoke near her.

Q: Does quitting smoking provide benefits for the woman as well as for her baby?

A: Pregnancy is a great time for a woman to quit. No matter how long she has been smoking, her body benefits from quitting. She will feel better and have more energy to go through the pregnancy and to care for her new baby.

Of course, she will also avoid many of the future health risks of smoking such as heart disease, cancer and other lung problems. AND she will save money that she can spend on herself and her new baby.

Q: If a woman quits smoking during pregnancy, will she have a hard time handling the stress?

A: She can learn to relax in other ways that are much better for her and the unborn baby. When she feels tense, she can take some deep breaths or chew sugarless gum. She can also do something with her hands like sew something for the baby or call a friend.

These are safer ways to handle stress. She can also remind herself that smoking will not make things any better.

Q: If a mother who smokes breast feeds her baby, does the nicotine get into her milk?

A: Breast feeding is a good way to feed a new baby but smoking may cause problems. Nicotine is a poison in cigarettes. So if the mother smokes, the baby drinks the poison in her breast milk.

Q: Are there any long-term harmful effects on the baby if the mother smokes during pregnancy?

A: Yes, there can be. Smoking during pregnancy may mean that after the child is born it will have more colds and other lung problems.

These children may also be slower learners in school. And they may be shorter and smaller than children of nonsmokers. And, of course, they are more likely to smoke when they get older because they see their parents smoking.

Q: We know that a woman should not smoke during pregnancy, but is it alright to go back to smoking after the baby is born?

A: It makes no sense at all for her to go back to smoking! Even after the baby is born, her smoking can hurt the baby.

Babies have very small lungs and airways which get even smaller when they breathe smoke-filled air. Smoking can make it hard for the baby to breathe. It can cause lung problems like bronchitis and pneumonia that could put the baby back in the hospital.

Babies of smokers also get more colds and coughs and middle-ear infections. Mothers should also ask people like family, friends, baby sitters, and day care workers not to smoke in any areas near the baby.

HOW CAN THE PREGNANT SMOKER GET HELP IN QUITTING?

Here are some ways to get started:

She can ask for help from her doctor or nurse and from family and friends.

She can make a list of her reasons for wanting to quit, for herself as well as for her baby.

Set a Quit-Date; the sooner the better. If a woman is not ready to set a date, she can begin to cut down on smoking. Then, she can make a plan to stop all smoking in the near future.

Ask for stop-smoking materials and read them. A smoker needs to learn about her own smoking habit and plan ways to cope with urges to smoke after she quits. She can try the four D's: Delay, Deep Breathe, Drink Water, and Do Something Else.

If a woman slips and goes back to smoking, she should first find out what caused the slip and then she can keep trying to quit again until she makes it for good. The only failure is if she stops trying.

When she stops smoking, she shows that she wants to raise her baby in a smoke-free world.

Contact your local American Lung Association (ALA) at 1-800-LUNG-USA(1-800-586-4872). ALA knows how to help pregnant smokers stop smoking for good.

ADDITIONAL AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION RESOURCES

Call your local American Lung Association at 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872) to find out more about how to stop smoking for good. The Lung Association is offering a new way to stop smoking through its [Freedom From Smoking®](#) online smoking cessation clinic. The program is based on the Lung Association's Freedom From Smoking® program, which has already helped thousands of smokers quit smoking for good. The [Freedom From Smoking®](#) online smoking cessation clinic can be accessed day or night, seven days a week, on any schedule a smoker chooses.

Visit www.ffsonline.org and stop smoking today!

There's never been a better time to quit!