

# Smoking & Diabetes



## ADVICE FOR SMOKERS WITH TYPE 1 DIABETES

You've heard that smoking is bad for you. Did you know that smoking is even more harmful for people with diabetes?

This brochure tells you how smoking affects people with Type 1 diabetes.

Smoking adds to the stress on your body. If you don't smoke, you will manage your diabetes better.

Quitting may not be easy, but it could be the best thing you can do to prevent or reduce the complications of diabetes.

We suggest ways to quit, and where to get more help if you need it.



## What smoking is doing to you

Smoking damages all people who smoke. However, for people with another illness, such as diabetes, asthma or high blood pressure, smoking worsens symptoms and makes the illness harder to manage.

Smoking can bring on illness associated with diabetes earlier, causing disability and death.

Young adult smokers with diabetes are much more likely to be sick than non-smokers with diabetes.

Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do to manage your diabetes and stay healthier for longer.

Many ill effects of smoking are reversible, but some damage can be permanent. The earlier you quit, the better for your health.

It is important to see your doctor and/or diabetes educator before quitting. Stopping smoking can affect how well you absorb insulin and your dose may need to be monitored or changed. Also, you should tell your doctor if you have suffered from a mental illness, including depression, or are taking any other medication.

*Where possible we have included research on the recovery of people with Type 1 diabetes after quitting smoking. But there are many gaps in the research so some of the following information on the benefits of quitting is based on studies of the general population.*

## Your blood glucose level

Smoking may reduce how well insulin works. Research shows that smokers with diabetes may need a larger dose of insulin than non-smokers to control their glucose levels.

People who smoke tend to have less control over their blood glucose level, and are more likely to suffer from levels that are too high or too low. After you quit, your control over your blood glucose levels can become similar to a person with diabetes who has never smoked.

## Your heart and blood

With every puff, chemicals from cigarette smoke pass through your lungs into your blood stream. They go everywhere your blood flows and damage the cells in your body.

If you smoke, you are more likely to die from heart disease than a non-smoker. Smoking makes your blood vessel walls sticky, and allows dangerous fatty material to build up. Your blood becomes thicker (more syrupy), stickier and more likely to clot. This can lead to heart attack and stroke.

Smoking puts stress on your heart. Every time you have a cigarette, nicotine temporarily increases your heart rate and blood pressure. Your small blood vessels narrow, reducing the blood flow, and your fingertips and toes become colder. As well, carbon monoxide replaces some of the oxygen in your blood, so it's harder for your heart and body to get the oxygen it needs.

When you quit smoking, you immediately stop putting your body under stress from all the damaging chemicals in cigarette smoke.

Within two days, almost all nicotine and carbon monoxide from cigarettes is out of your bloodstream. Your heart and muscles can take up oxygen more easily.

Over the next few months:

- your immune system improves and your body is better at fighting off infection
- your good cholesterol level increases
- your blood becomes less thick and 'sticky'
- the flow of blood to your hands and feet improves.

Quitting reduces your risk of heart disease and stroke compared to a continuing smoker.

## Your eyes

Both smoking and diabetes damage the eyes. If you smoke, you increase your risk of eye disease that can lead to blindness.

Quitting smoking quickly reduces levels of damaging chemicals in your blood stream that can harm your eyes. It also reduces your risk of eye disease.

## Your feet and legs

People with diabetes are more likely to have poor blood circulation in their feet and legs. Smoking also affects blood flow, increases the risk of blood clots and narrows the small blood vessels. Over time, smoking causes the build up of fatty material on your artery walls, leading to peripheral vascular disease (PVD). If you have diabetes and smoke, you are much more likely to get PVD.

PVD can be painful. It can eventually lead to gangrene, and some people may need to have a limb or limbs amputated.

Quitting smoking will reduce your risk of PVD. With time your risk of developing symptoms of PVD becomes less and less, compared to someone who keeps smoking.

For people who develop symptoms of PVD, quitting slows down the worsening of the disease. Compared to smokers, people who quit have less pain, they live longer, respond better to treatment, and are less likely to need amputation.

It is necessary to quit completely as even smoking one or two cigarettes a day immediately affects your circulation and can affect treatment.

## Your kidneys

Smoking increases the risk of kidney disease (nephropathy). Symptoms of kidney disease are more common in smokers with diabetes than non-smokers with diabetes. This disease can lead to kidney failure and death.

Quitting smoking helps prevent the development of kidney disease.

## Your nerves

For people with diabetes, smoking increases the risk of developing and the worsening of nerve damage (neuropathy). This can lead to numbness and pain in your arms and legs.

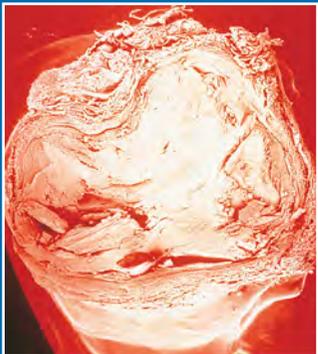
Smoking may also add to nerve damage in your heart, blood vessels, digestive system, sex organs and eyes. This can lead to problems such as dizziness on standing, diarrhoea and poor bladder control.



**A cross section of a healthy blood vessel.**



**Fat deposits have reduced the space inside the blood vessel by three quarters.**



**The vessel is blocked by a clot.**



Long-term smokers have a greater risk of neuropathy. This suggests that quitting smoking as early as possible gives you the most benefit.

### **Your sex life (men)**

If you are male and smoke, you are more likely to have problems getting or maintaining an erection, even in your 30s and 40s. Diabetes further increases your risk of erection problems. The longer you smoke, the greater your risk of problems.

Quitting smoking can help prevent erection problems, particularly in younger men.

### **Your teeth**

Smoking causes periodontal disease, which can lead to infected swollen gums and loss of jawbone. Smokers are more likely to have tooth decay and lose their teeth.

Quitting smoking reduces your risk of periodontal disease and helps your body to fight infection.



## More reasons to quit

Try not to think of smoking as your one treat or 'vice' or as a reward for sticking to your diet. Even though you may eat well, smoking greatly increases the risk of the diseases you are trying to avoid through good management of your diet.

Quitting reduces your risk of cancer, lung diseases that cause breathing difficulties, and early death compared to someone who keeps smoking. It helps prevent loss of bone density (osteoporosis) and hip fractures. Women who quit increase their fertility and ensure a healthier pregnancy.

Within months your lungs will be healthier. You'll also smell fresher, save money, and feel that you've achieved something that gives you more control over your life.

Remember the earlier you quit, the more you gain.

## Cutting down

Cutting down the number of cigarettes you smoke does not reduce the main risks from smoking. Only stopping smoking completely gives you major health benefits.

## Planning to quit

### Getting started

Some people see quitting as a private battle between themselves and cigarettes. But getting help is not a sign of weakness or lack of will power – it's a smart way to quit.

### FOR YOUR BEST CHANCE OF QUITTING:

#### Get some support

- Quitline (13 7848)
- A health professional who is trained to help people quit
- An interactive website (QuitCoach) or SMS service (QuitTxt).



### Use nicotine replacement products or quitting medication

## Get some support

A support service gives you motivation, confidence, new skills and structure. Getting support will give you a much greater chance of long term success.

Here are some support services:

### Call a Quitline advisor 13 7848

Quitline advisors offer help with quitting for the cost of a local call. Your Quitline advisor is trained and experienced and knows how tough quitting can be. They will talk with you about your difficulties in quitting and will give you reliable information and support.

Your call is confidential. This means you don't have to give your name if you don't want to. You can talk with your Quitline advisor once or as many times as it is helpful. If you decide to use the Quitline callback counselling service, Quitline advisors will arrange to call you before and after your quit date at times convenient to you. This has been shown to be very effective to help smokers quit and stay quit.

### Go online with the QuitCoach [www.quitcoach.org.au](http://www.quitcoach.org.au)

The QuitCoach is a web-based computer program that asks you questions and helps you quit by giving free personal advice tailored to your needs.

## QuitTxt

QuitTxt provides regular SMS messages including tips and encouragement to keep you on track throughout your quit attempt. To begin, all you need to do is register and complete a brief questionnaire at [www.quit.org.au/quittxt](http://www.quit.org.au/quittxt).

### Talk to your doctor, diabetes educator or other health professional

Some health professionals have been trained to help people quit. For example, your doctor, dentist, pharmacist, psychologist, community health nurse or cardiac rehabilitation nurse may be trained to help you.

It is a good idea to talk to your doctor and/or diabetes educator before you quit smoking. They may want to see you for regular health checks and check your insulin dose or blood pressure after you quit. Your doctor can advise you about using nicotine replacement products or a prescription medicine to quit.

### Use nicotine replacement products or quitting medication

These products increase your chances of quitting and reduce withdrawal symptoms such as cravings, irritability, and anxiety.

There are two types:

- nicotine replacement products (nicotine patches, lozenge, inhalator, mouth spray, gum and strips) which are widely available. They give you a lower dose of nicotine and none of the other damaging toxins in cigarette smoke. Using these products to quit is much safer than continuing to smoke.
- prescription medication like Champix (varenicline).

Nicotine patches and Champix are available through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme with your doctor's prescription. This means they are cheaper.

If you have diabetes, it is important that you talk to your doctor first before you take any quitting products or medications. You can discuss which would be the most suitable for you. Your pharmacist can tell you more about these products.

### Would quitting medications help you?

Do you:

- smoke your first cigarette within 30 minutes of waking up?
- smoke more than 10 cigarettes per day?
- have cravings and withdrawal symptoms when trying to quit?

These are signs of nicotine addiction. The more signs you have, the more help you will get from quitting medications.

## Useful tips

### Managing your weight

Weight gain after quitting is often a concern for people with diabetes. It is not always part of quitting smoking but it is common. The main causes of weight gain are thought to be due to eating more food and the slowing down of your metabolism when you quit (so you burn slightly fewer kilojoules than while you were smoking). Some people experience an increase in appetite as a withdrawal symptom, but their eating patterns tend to eventually return to normal.

Different people can gain different amounts of weight when stopping smoking. If you do put on weight, try not to be too hard on yourself. By quitting smoking you're doing great things for your health. For example, even if you gain weight after quitting, you will still have a lower risk of heart disease and stroke than if you keep smoking.

### What you can do

If worrying about weight gain is stopping you from quitting, talk to a health professional who can give you advice. They can help you make a healthy eating and exercise plan that suits you. Your doctor can also refer you to a dietitian or other specialist.

Making small changes each week can be easier and more lasting than making a lot of changes at once.

### Tips to help manage your weight

- Use the time and money you've saved from not smoking to plan and cook tasty, healthy meals.
- Don't try to stick to strict calorie controlled diets. Constant bouts of hunger can undermine your success at quitting.
- Try not to miss meals, especially breakfast. It's important to plan for and eat three meals a day.
- Remove or reduce processed snacks (e.g. chips, biscuits, lollies, soft drink) from the pantry or fridge.
- Prepare some healthy snacks, such as carrot and celery sticks or vegetable strips, sugar-free milk products, whole fruits (not fruit juice) and nuts.
- Find other ways than eating to distract yourself from cravings and withdrawal symptoms, such as listening to music, talking to a friend, drinking water, doing puzzles, or counting to 100. Experiment until you find things that work for you.
- If you use food to help you deal with feelings, such as depression or loneliness, try other activities that make you feel better. If you feel you need more support, talk to your doctor.
- Sometimes our bodies tell us we're hungry when really we're thirsty. Try drinking some water before reaching for a snack.
- A hot drink can be comforting – try peppermint or herbal tea.
- Do some exercise you enjoy. This can help keep your weight down and can also help you beat cravings.

## Managing your weight

Some more good food habits from a diabetes dietitian:

- Eat more food with fibre such as green vegetables, peas, beans and lentils.
- Flavour food with spices, herbs and garlic.
- Use a variety of cooking oils.
- If possible eat fish two or three times a week.
- Eat fresh fruit instead of artificially sweetened desserts.
- Eat less cheese, rich sauces, and take-away food high in fat, sugar and salt, such as pizza.
- Try to avoid potato chips, French fries, olives, peanuts and salted biscuits.



## Managing stress

Some people say that smoking calms their nerves and helps with stress. Nicotine may make your brain feel more relaxed, but your body is put under stress from the chemicals in cigarette smoke.

Quitting can be stressful for some people in the first month or so. This may be partly due to coping with withdrawal symptoms. Also, it takes time to settle into new routines and become more comfortable with new ways of managing without cigarettes. However, other people have a more positive experience of stopping smoking and feel more satisfied.

A few months after quitting, most people tend to feel better than, or as good as, when they were smoking.

For practical help with stress during and after quitting, ring the Quitline (13 7848). You can talk to an advisor about your situation or order a quit pack which includes the self-help quitting guide *Quit because you can*. The Quit website [www.quit.org.au](http://www.quit.org.au) also has tips about handling stress, social occasions, alcohol, living with a smoker and much more.

Talk to your doctor about using medication to help reduce withdrawal symptoms.

**There is help  
available**

 **Quitline 13 7848**  
**quit.org.au**

**To help with cravings after you've quit**

### **TRY THE 4Ds**

**Delay acting on the urge to open a pack and light a cigarette.**

After a few minutes, the urge to smoke weakens, especially if you do the following:

**Deep breathe.**

Take a long, slow breath, and let it out slowly. Repeat three times.

**Drink water.**

Sip it slowly, and hold it in your mouth to savour the taste.

**Do something else.**

Take your mind off smoking by taking action. Try putting on some music, going for a walk, or ringing a friend.

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Quit Victoria is a joint initiative of Cancer Council Victoria, the Department of Health, the National Heart Foundation and the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation.

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