

# WHY QUIT NOW?

A RESOURCE  
FOR THOSE AT  
HIGH RISK FOR  
LUNG CANCER



LUNG CANCER ALLIANCE

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1-800-298-2436

[LungCancerAlliance.org](https://LungCancerAlliance.org)

## LUNG CANCER SCREENING AND QUITTING SMOKING

Congratulations! You have already made one important decision: to be screened for lung cancer. People are screened for lung cancer because they are at high risk for the disease. The process of being screened can seem scary. You might think, "What if something is found? Why didn't I quit smoking before?" The fact is that many people are considering quitting smoking when they get screened for lung cancer.

**You may be thinking that you'll wait and see what happens with your screening before deciding what to do about your smoking. There are many good reasons to consider quitting now.**

### WHY QUIT NOW?

Most people who continue to smoke have tried to stop, usually several times. Your relationship with cigarettes may be complicated. It may feel as though smoking helps you in some ways and quitting can be difficult. However, there are many good reasons to quit. Quitting now will:

- Still decrease your risk of lung cancer. While your risk will not go back to that of someone who has never smoked, quitting at any age can help
- Improve general respiratory symptoms, such as coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath
- Reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke and peripheral vascular disease (narrowing of blood vessels outside the heart)
- Decrease your risk of developing other lung diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or emphysema
- Decrease your risk of developing other types of cancer, including that of the head and neck, kidney and bladder
- Decrease your risk of erectile dysfunction
- Improve the health of your teeth and gums
- Improve your overall health, including your energy level, mood, immune system and more

In addition, smoking cigarettes is expensive. It makes your hair and clothing smell and leads to premature aging. It's also dangerous to household pets. In most public places you have to go outside to smoke which is inconvenient and takes you away from activities and loved ones. Quitting will also set a good example for family members and reassure your loved ones that you are working to reduce your risk for lung cancer and other tobacco-related illnesses.

### HOW CAN I QUIT?

Talk to your screening team or primary care provider. They want to help! They will be able to help you determine the resources that best suit your needs. Several approaches are often effective for smokers who want to quit. It is important to consider that quitting can be challenging both for physical (nicotine addiction) and psychological reasons (habits and triggers).

## A WORD ABOUT E-CIGARETTES

Some people believe e-cigarettes can be used to cut back on or replace regular cigarette smoking. However, research shows that cancer survivors who continued to smoke and used e-cigarettes were just as likely to continue smoking regular cigarettes as those who did not use e-cigarettes. E-cigarettes are fairly new and many people assume that they lack the cancer-causing chemicals found in regular cigarettes. Quite simply, the safety of e-cigarettes has not been studied enough to know what health risks they may pose. Considering that there are several quitting methods with proven safety and benefit, we encourage you to use these methods rather than e-cigarettes.

Quitting is more successful when people use a combination of methods so try to combine some of the tools listed below:

Resource	What is it?	How can I get it?
Talk with your doctor	Your doctor can give you good information to help you quit. He/she can help guide you to resources and help you create a plan to quit or cut down prior to quitting.	Tell your doctor or your screening team that you want to quit smoking and want their help.
Individual, group or telephone counseling	Getting ongoing support can help you quit and stay that way. This support can be found in a number of ways, including in person or by phone.	Ask your doctor or screening team for information about counseling options. Call 1-800-Quit-Now for telephone support.
Digital cessation tools	More resources are available online or on your mobile phone. They may include message boards to connect with others trying to quit or programs to send you supportive text messages.	Several websites offer online, text or smart phone apps to help you quit. Here are a few: <a href="http://www.smokefree.gov">www.smokefree.gov</a> <a href="http://www.becomeanex.org">www.becomeanex.org</a> <a href="http://www.ffsonline.org/">http://www.ffsonline.org/</a>
Nicotine Replacement Therapy	Available in patch, gum and lozenge form, these can help ease nicotine withdrawal symptoms.	These are often available over the counter at your local pharmacy. Your pharmacist can answer questions about each type.
Prescription medications	There are prescription medications that have been found to be safe and effective for managing withdrawal symptoms.	Your doctor or screening team staff can discuss whether these options would be appropriate for you and write a prescription for you.

During the screening process, one of two things will happen.

**NOTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY WILL BE FOUND.** Finding out that your lungs are clear and that you do not have lung cancer may bring great relief. The screening process may put your risk into perspective and quitting smoking now would make all the sense in the world. By doing so, you decrease your future risk for lung cancer and other cancers and diseases and can make any lung issues you already have better. Research even shows that being screened for lung cancer can provide just the motivation many people have been looking for to quit.

**SOMETHING WILL BE FOUND.** If a nodule(s) is found, it may be small and watching it over time may be suggested. It may turn out to be nothing. Many people who are over the age of 50 have nodules in their lungs. For a small percentage of people screened, something will be found that requires further testing. Either way, you may feel the need to have more control over your life. Quitting smoking may empower you in ways you never imagined.

You may think you've smoked too long to consider quitting now. The good news is that it's never too late to benefit from quitting smoking!



## LUNG CANCER ALLIANCE

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SAVING LIVES AND ADVANCING  
RESEARCH BY EMPOWERING THOSE  
LIVING WITH AND AT RISK FOR  
LUNG CANCER

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### WHAT WE DO

- Offer personalized support, information and referral services at no cost through a team of trained, dedicated staff members to help patients, their loved ones and those at risk.
- Advocate for increased lung cancer research funding and equitable access, coverage and reimbursement for screening, treatment, diagnostics and testing.
- Conduct nationwide education campaigns about the disease, risk and early detection.

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The content of this brochure has been reviewed by members of our Medical and Professional Advisory Board.

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