



Quitting Smoking

November 19, 2009, is the American Cancer Society's "[Great American Smokeout](#)". This is an annual event to highlight the dangers of smoking and challenge people to stop using tobacco products.

According to the American Lung Association, approximately 438,000 Americans will die each year from smoking-related illnesses ⁽¹⁾.

- Smoking kills more than one in five people in the U.S.
- Approximately half of all routine cigarette smokers will eventually die from their addiction
- Cigarette smoke contains 69 chemicals that cause cancer

Nicotine is a highly addictive drug found in tobacco. It can be as addictive as heroin or cocaine; when inhaled, it can affect your heart, blood vessels, hormonal system, metabolism, and brain ^(1, 2).

For those who smoke or use nicotine, it can be difficult to break the addiction without help. Fortunately, smokers have a wide variety of support resources available to them, including medications,

counseling services, and self-help groups (Nicotine Anonymous). The emotional support of family, friends, and co-workers is also important for someone trying to quit smoking ⁽²⁾.

There are many reasons to stop smoking; health concerns are usually at the top of the list. Smokers are at increased risk of developing cancer, suffering from lung and blood vessel diseases, or having a stroke. Those who smoke are also two times more likely to die from a heart attack than non-smokers ⁽²⁾.

Quitting smoking has major health and social rewards; these include ⁽²⁾:

- Smoke-free breath, hair and clothes
- Whiter teeth
- Improved sense of taste and smell
- Ability to breathe easier

For more information on smoking and how to quit smoking, please visit the following web-links:

Quitting Smoking Information:

- [Guide to Quitting Smoking](#)
- [Reasons to Quit](#)
- [Planning Your Quit Day](#)
- [Helping a Smoker Quit: The Do's and Don'ts](#)

References:

1. [American Lung Association](#)
2. [American Cancer Society](#)

Author: Karen Hulsmeyer, R.N.

HUMANA MILITARY
HEALTHCARE SERVICES

