



# BalanceHealth Newsletter

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## Quit Smoking Today

It is a widely known fact that smoking is extremely detrimental to your overall health and harms almost every major organ in your body. Thanks to research and extensive educational campaigns, we now have the luxury of being informed consumers. We are fully aware that smoking is one of the most serious health hazards. Luckily many Americans are heeding the warnings as the percentage of adults who smoke in the United States has dropped by half since 1965. However, just over 20% of American adults, which translates to about 46 **million** people, still smoke tobacco.

### Just how bad is smoking for you?

Smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. Smoking causes an estimated 90% of all lung cancer deaths in men and 80% of lung cancer deaths in women. 90% of chronic lung diseases such as emphysema are caused by smoking. Smoking increases risk for heart disease and stroke by 2 to 4 times. In addition to lung cancer, smoking also increases the risk of developing many cancers including acute myeloid leukemia, bladder cancer, cervical cancer, cancer of the esophagus, kidney cancer, cancer of the voice box, mouth cancer, stomach cancer, and uterine cancer. Smoking also increases adverse reproductive risk for infertility, pre-term delivery, still birth, low

birth weight, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

If all the potential harm smoking does to your health wasn't bad enough, lighting up also damages your looks. Since smoking constricts the blood supply that keeps skin looking healthy, smokers tend to look 1.4 years older than non-smokers. Smoking is widely known to cause premature aging and wrinkles. The nicotine from cigarettes stains teeth, fingers, and nails. Experts also believe that the toxic chemicals in cigarettes can damage the DNA in hair follicles resulting in thinner hair that tends to go gray/white sooner than non-smokers. Wounds take longer to heal and scars tend to be larger and redder in smokers. This is due to the fact that nicotine causes your blood vessels to narrow which limits oxygen flow to tiny vessels, therefore prolonging the healing process. Finally, smokers are up to 6 times more likely to develop gum disease, which can lead to tooth loss.

### Second Hand Smoke:

If you are not worried about your own health, consider how smoking affects those around you. Non-smokers who inhale other people's smoke on a regular basis are at risk for some of the same health problems that afflict

For more information or advice about smoking cessation contact your Wellness Coordinator by calling

**1.800.327.2255**

**eni's** BalanceHealth program is a confidential service provided by your employer to help you achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle.





smokers. For example, people who live with a smoker have a 25% increased risk of death from a heart attack and are more susceptible to stroke than people who breathe clean air. Children who are exposed to second hand smoke have a higher risk of developing bronchitis, pneumonia, and middle ear infections.

### **Smoking Cessation:**

Smoking is extremely addictive both physically and psychologically, which makes quitting very difficult. When smokers attempt to quit they will usually experience physical withdrawal symptoms that can be very unpleasant. In addition, smoking becomes a very habitual part of people's daily lives. Many smokers really look forward to that afternoon cigarette break, or feel a sense of calm when they smoke while driving in heavy traffic, or always enjoy a cigarette with a glass of wine in the evening. Breaking your daily routine can be just as difficult as dealing with the physical discomfort. Since quitting is so challenging, it takes most smokers several tries before they finally quit for good. Fortunately there are many methods that have been proven to help smokers successfully quit. Everyone is different; some smokers can quit cold turkey and others need to gradually reduce the amount they smoke each day. Here are a few strategies to help you quit smoking:

**Find Support** – There are many smoking cessation programs available today. Utilize your wellness benefit through eni, check out an online program, consult your doctor, or call a help line. Ask your friends and family to hassle you every time they witness you smoking and if others in your life smoke try to convince them to quit along with you. It always helps to have support!

**Acknowledge why you want to Quit** – It can help to write down all of the reasons you should quit smoking. When you get an urge to light up you can refer back to that piece of paper to remind yourself that you want to set a good example for your kids, protect your

health, or whatever your personal reasons for quitting may be.

**Explore Available Products** – If you are having an especially hard time quitting, you may want to consider consulting with your doctor about products that help people quit smoking such as a nicotine replacement product. These products can help curb cravings and are helpful to some smokers.

**Manage Stress** – Smokers often use nicotine products to calm their nerves, so stress can increase the urge to smoke. Try healthy stress busters such as exercise, deep breathing, or visits with friends to help you feel calm and in control.

**Avoid Triggers** – If you tend to smoke more in certain places or circumstances, try to avoid them when you first quit. For example, if you always smoke when you are out at a bar, instead go to the movies or an art gallery, anywhere where smoking is not permitted. It may also help to avoid other smokers and instead spend time with your non-smoking friends and relatives.

**Reward Yourself** – Quitting smoking is a major accomplishment, so be sure to celebrate your success, it will propel you to continue on your non smoking journey. You can save up all the money you would have spent on cigarettes for an entire week and then use the money to treat yourself to something special.

Quitting is one of the very best things you can do for your health. The sooner you quit the less devastating the effects of smoking will be on your health. So start thinking about quitting today and then take it one day at a time to better health!

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