

Greenwich Hospital

SMOKING CESSATION & WHY SMOKING IS BAD FOR YOUR HEALTH

PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

Why should I quit smoking?

One of the most important things you can do for your health is to stop smoking. If you continue to smoke, you may become one of the more than 430,000 smoking-related deaths that occur every year. Smoking is the **Number 1** cause of preventable diseases and death in the United States. Tobacco is a major risk factor for both heart disease/heart attack, stroke and cancer.

Smoking increases blood pressure, the tendency for blood to clot, and the risk of recurrent coronary heart disease after bypass surgery. It also decreases exercise tolerance. Additionally, smoking is a major risk factor for most cancers.

Women who smoke and take birth control pills are at an even greater risk for heart disease and stroke compared to women who use birth control pills but do not smoke.

Can my smoking hurt anyone else?

In addition to your own risks, the second hand smoke created by cigarettes is very hazardous to the health of your loved ones.

- More than 37,000 people a year die from heart and blood vessel diseases caused by other people's smoke.
- Children whose parents smoke are more at risk for asthma and other harmful lung illnesses.
- People who smoke are more likely to cough and spread germs in the household. This causes more chest illnesses in children and frail elderly who may also be in the home.
- Exposure to second hand smoke increases the risk of heart disease for others in the home, including children.
- Smoking has been proven to lead to poor pregnancy outcomes and it is a risk factor for sudden infant death syndrome.
- Most deaths that occur as a result of fires in the home are caused by smoking materials.

All of these risk factors are reasons to quit smoking.

What medications are available to help me stop smoking?

Your physician can prescribe medication to help you quit smoking. The United States Food and Drug Administration has approved the medications listed below to help you stop smoking and to lessen the urge to smoke. **DO NOT SMOKE** while on these nicotine products.

1. Nicotine gum - available over-the-counter
2. Nicotine patch - available over-the-counter
3. Bupropion SR - available by prescription
4. Nicotine inhaler - available by prescription
5. Nicotine nasal spray - available by prescription only.

How do I stop smoking and the cigarette cravings?

Even if you have been unsuccessful with attempts in the past, you can stop smoking. It takes some people an average of six times to try to quit smoking before they are able to quit for good. Each time you try to quit will bring you closer to your goal of succeeding. 5 Key steps for quitting outlined by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services are listed below:

1. GET READY:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Set a quit date and stick to it without a single puff! ➤ Think about past quit attempts, what worked, and what did not. ➤ My Quit Date: _____
2. GET SUPPORT:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tell your family and friends that you are quitting and seek their encouragement. ➤ Make a list of the people who can help you. ➤ Speak with your doctor about quitting
3. LEARN NEW SKILLS AND BEHAVIORS TO COMBAT CRAVINGS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Try to get more sleep and reduce stress when possible. ➤ Change your routines or habits, such as getting up from the table right after eating to prevent from smoking. ➤ Distract yourself from the urge to smoke with other activities, such as exercise, reading, calling one of the people on your support list. ➤ Snack on low calorie foods such as carrots, celery, air-popped popcorn, or sugarless gum when you have cravings.
4. GET MEDICATION AND USE IT CORRECTLY:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Talk with your doctor regarding medications to assist in quitting, even if they are over-the-counter medications to make sure they are right for you.
5. BE PREPARED FOR RELAPSE OR DIFFICULT SITUATIONS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Avoid alcohol when possible. ➤ Be careful around other smokers ➤ Avoid using the smoking habit to improve your mood. ➤ Eat healthy and stay active.

What are the health benefits of stopping smoking?

In 2 weeks to 3 months your circulation improves, physical endurance improves, walking and climbing steps becomes easier, and lung function increases up to 30%.

In 1 to 9 months coughing, sinus congestion and fatigue decrease. The cilia in the lung regrow thus cleansing the lungs and reducing your risk of infection.

In 1 year the risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's.

In 5 years the lung cancer risk of the average ex-smoker (who smoked 1 pack per day) decreases by almost half, the stroke risk is gradually reduced to that of a nonsmoker, and the risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, and esophagus is half that of a smoker's.

In 10 years the lung cancer death rate approaches that of someone who has never smoked.

In 15 years the risk of coronary heart disease and stroke is similar to someone who never smoked.

Sources: American Heart Association @ www.americanheart.org Retrieved March 2006.

American Stroke Association @ www.strokeassociation.org

U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services. (2000). Treating tobacco use and dependence. Retrieved from www.surgeongeneral.gov March 2006

*For more Patient Fact Sheets, see the Greenwich Hospital web site at www.greenhosp.org and
Click on Patients & Visitors, then Patient Education*

Rev. 7/04; 3/06