

# HEALTH

## For Your Health

BY DR. GERALD F. JOSEPH JR.

### Kick Butts in 2010!

At the beginning of a new year, many Americans try to get healthy and kick bad habits. If you smoke, quitting should be at the top of your list.

Each puff of cigarette smoke exposes users to 2,500 chemicals and

cancer-causing agents, including nicotine, tar, and carbon monoxide. Smoking causes 87 percent of lung cancer deaths and increases the risk of developing cervical and other cancers. Smokers are more likely to experience heart attack, stroke, emphysema, bronchitis, osteoporosis, rheumatoid arthritis, cataracts, and infertility than nonsmokers are.



Pregnant women who smoke put their babies at a higher risk for preterm birth, low birth weight, sudden infant death syndrome, poor lung function, asthma, and bronchitis. The harmful chemicals in cigarette smoke are also passed through breast milk to babies.

Smokers who quit can stop or reverse the damage caused by cigarettes. In the days and months after you quit, your heart rate and blood pressure drop to healthier levels, and your breathing, circulation, and sense of smell and taste may improve. Heart attack risk decreases by 50 percent within the first year

after quitting, and the chances of developing lung cancer, heart disease, and other ailments fall to nearly that of a nonsmoker in the first few years.

If you are thinking about quitting, talk to your doctor about methods that may help you succeed.

Nicotine replacement products, such as patches, gum, nasal spray, inhalers, and lozenges, can help satisfy urges. Your doctor may also prescribe medications such as bupropion or varenicline to help you stop smoking. Using one or a combination of these methods can double your chances of quitting.

Smokers can call 800-QUIT-NOW, a free national smoking cessation hotline, to speak with trained counselors who will help develop individualized quit plans. Your doctor will also have information on support groups, such as Nicotine Anonymous, and other local smoking cessation resources.

According to the American Cancer Society, most smokers say they want to stop smoking. But it takes most smokers several tries to finally quit for good.

*Dr. Gerald F. Joseph Jr. is president of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.*



## Growing healthy families together.

### Connect with WIC.

Investing in Oregon's future with nutrition education and healthy foods.

Learn more about how the Oregon WIC Program helps families:

[www.wic.oregon.gov](http://www.wic.oregon.gov)

1-800-SAFENET (1-800-723-3628)

WIC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

oregon  
wic  
program

 **DHS**  
Oregon Department  
of Human Services