

# Why and how to quit smoking

Tobacco use has serious health risks, but quitting has benefits within 20 minutes

By Rhiannon Bauman

To the Blue Mountain Eagle

**T**obacco is the most heavily used addictive product in the United States.

Smoking harms every organ in the body. Cigarette smoking accounts for about one-third of all cancer deaths, including those from lung cancer. In fact, cigarette smoking has been linked to about 90 percent of all lung cancer cases. Research shows smoking increases the risk of heart disease.

Smokers who smoke around others harm them as well through secondhand smoke. The deadly effects that smoking has on our bodies is extensive. Children and infants are at most risk from people using tobacco products, especially with secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke is a known cause of sudden infant death syndrome, respiratory problems and asthma attacks in infants and children. When adults smoke inside the household, they are exposing their children to the risk of slow lung growth. This means they are more susceptible to bronchitis and pneumonia compared to children of nonsmoking parents.

The best thing you can do for yourself and your loved ones is to quit using tobacco products. To help you quit using tobacco products and start living a healthy lifestyle, you first need to find your reason and get motivated to quit. You need to be fully committed to help reduce the urge of using.

Second, you need to lean on your loved ones, or find a group of people going through the same thing you are. Here locally in Grant County we have a smoking cessation program called Kick Buts. This program has weekly support meetings along with monthly education meetings to help you with quitting. For more information on this program, call Len's Drug at 541-575-0629.

Third, you need to give yourself a break. It is hard to quit tobacco when your body is addicted to it. Many people try several times to quit using tobacco and that is fine. If you relapse, do not get discouraged. Instead, think of why or what made you relapse and use the opportunity to recommit to quitting tobacco.

In addition to living a healthier life-



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style, you will also be saving money from not buying the tobacco products you were using everyday. In fact, if you bought a pack of cigarettes a day, you would save \$1,825 a year by quitting! You could use this newfound money for a vacation or treat yourself to something to celebrate your success in quitting your addiction.

Quitting smoking has a multitude of benefits for your body — all the way from just the first 20 minutes to 15 years after you have smoked your last cigarette. Within 20 minutes after you smoke that last cigarette, your body begins a series of changes that continue for years.

For more information, visit [smoking.drugabuse.gov](http://smoking.drugabuse.gov), [www.teens.drugabuse.gov](http://www.teens.drugabuse.gov), [www.cdc.gov/tobacco](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco), [www.smoke-free.gov](http://www.smoke-free.gov) or call 1-800-QUITNOW.

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## Benefits of quitting

- After 20 minutes, your heart rate drops.
- After 12 hours, the carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.
- Two weeks to three months after quitting, your heart attack risk begins to drop, and your lung function begins to improve.
- One to nine months after quitting, your coughing and shortness of breath decrease.
- One year after quitting, your added risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's.
- Five to 15 years after quitting, your stroke risk is reduced to that of a non smoker's.
- Ten years after quitting, your lung cancer death rate is about half that of a smoker's, and your risk of cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney and pancreas decrease.
- Fifteen years after quitting, your risk of coronary heart disease is back to that of a non smoker's.

(Information from the Office on Smoking and Health, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion.)