



healthy living

Become Smoke Free: Healthy Me, Healthy Baby

Why quit?

When you're pregnant, one of the most important things you can do to keep you—and your baby—healthy is to quit smoking.

Quitting smoking protects you and your baby from serious health risks, including:

- Preterm delivery
- Bleeding from the placenta
- Infertility
- Low birth weight
- Increased risk of childhood asthma
- Increased risk of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome)

Quitting smoking at any time will reduce these risks, but the earlier you quit, the lower the risks.

How to quit?

Think about what you like and don't like about smoking. Making a list can help you consider your options. When the list of what you don't like is longer than what you do like, it's time to quit.

Even before you quit, you can take steps to get ready to be smoke free. Review the ideas below or come up with your own. For instance, you can:

- Learn your triggers (the situations where you're most likely to smoke) so you can find ways to cope with them without smoking.
- Set aside blocks of time when you won't smoke, such as between noon and 6 p.m. every day. Cravings will pass, whether you smoke or not.
- Practice the four D's to get through a craving without smoking:
 - Delay a little while before giving in to a craving.
 - Drink water instead of lighting up immediately.
 - Distract yourself by thinking about your reasons for quitting or doing something different.
 - Take at least 4 deep belly breaths, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Get support. Identify people who can help during this change and let them know you're quitting. If your partner smokes, agree to keep a smoke-free zone in the house and around you.

How to stay smoke free?

Be prepared, you're going to be tempted. Once you're home with your baby it can be easy to slip back into old patterns. Be ready to deal with your triggers and stay on track.

- Keep your list of reasons for quitting handy. For example, when you don't smoke your breast milk is healthier for your baby, and the risk of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome) is lower.
- Check in with yourself. If you're feeling like having a cigarette, are you hungry, upset, tired, or bored? How can you meet that need without smoking?
- Talk to your doctor about possible treatment options. Nicotine replacement therapy isn't usually recommended during pregnancy or while breastfeeding.

Also, enforce a smoke-free rule in your home. Secondhand smoke can harm your baby's health.

What if you slip?

Slipping and having a cigarette doesn't mean you've failed. In fact, slips can give you feedback. Ask yourself:

- Did you uncover a new trigger?
- Should you pay more attention to an old one?
- How can you avoid a slip in the future?

E-cigarettes aren't a healthy alternative

E-cigarettes or vaping shouldn't be used as a substitute to regular cigarettes or as a quit-smoking aid. Although they don't burn like regular cigarettes, e-cigarettes still contain nicotine. Nicotine can harm your baby's developing brain.

Additional resources

Quitting tobacco is a process, and many people try several times before becoming smoke free for good. If you're having difficulty staying smoke free, you're not alone. We have resources to help:

- Visit kpdoc.org/quittingtobacco
- Contact our Wellness Coaching Center at 1-866-251-4514
- Call the California Smoker's Helpline at 1-800-No-Butts.
- Visit women.smokefree.gov

Your health and your pregnancy can be seriously affected by violence or abuse. If you are hit, hurt, or threatened by a partner or spouse, there is help. Call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 or visit ndvh.org.