



Fact Sheet

Smoking

What is nicotine dependence?

Nicotine dependence — also called tobacco dependence — is an addiction to tobacco products caused by the drug nicotine. Nicotine dependence means you can't stop using the substance, even though it's causing you harm.

Nicotine produces physical and mood-altering effects in your brain that are temporarily pleasing. These effects make you want to use tobacco and lead to dependence. At the same time, stopping tobacco use causes withdrawal symptoms, including irritability and anxiety.

Health Benefits of Cessation

Smoking is the number one cause of preventable death in the United States, leading to about 393,000 deaths per year. In addition, second hand smoke accounts for another 50,000 deaths each year. According to the Surgeon General, quitting smoking is the single most important step a smoker can take to improve the quality and length of his or her life.

The benefits of smoking cessation begin almost immediately after a person quits. Below is a timeline of some of the many benefits quitters will experience:

- 20 minutes after quitting:** Heart rate drops to a normal level
- 12 hours after quitting:** Carbon monoxide level in the blood drops to a normal level
- 2 weeks after quitting:** Lung and heart function begins to improve
- 1 month after quitting:** Cough and shortness of breath decreases
- 1 year after quitting:** Risk of heart disease is half that of a smoker
- 5-15 years after quitting:** Risk of stroke, lung, mouth, throat, esophageal, bladder, cervical, and kidney cancers are all half that of a smoker

How to Quit

There are many ways to quit smoking, but not every method is right for every person. Here are a few methods that are covered for members of Benefits Options:

- **ASHline Smoking Cessation Program**
- **Free OTC and Prescription medications**
- **Mayo Clinic EmbodyHealth Web portal—My Smoke Free Future Program**
- **Programs Sponsored by Medical Vendors**

Prepare for Relapse

Approximately 75% of all smokers who attempt to quit experience at least one relapse. In fact, the average number of attempts to quit by long term smokers is as many as six times. Remember that staying smoke free requires more than one attempt for most Americans. However, each attempt can also help in realizing the best method for each individual, and eventually lead to long term success.

Arizona Ashline

The State partners with MedImpact, ASHline, and UA to provide a quality quit program for all members, including pharmacy consult, expert quit coaches, 24/7 support, and medications at no cost to employees. Call 1-866-218-6646 to register.