



Be Tobacco Free

Healthy Living Message



What's Important to Know?

"Tobacco" in this document refers to commercial products such as cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, and others, and does not include the sacred and traditional use of tobacco by some American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

Stopping tobacco use is the single most important thing you can do to improve your health and protect your family's health. If you stop smoking or using other forms of tobacco, you and your family will experience short and long-term health benefits. It's never too late to stop—your health will improve at any age after stopping tobacco!

All forms of commercial tobacco use—including cigarettes, cigars, pipes, snuff, snus, chewing tobacco and more—are harmful. Tobacco use harms nearly every organ of the body and causes:

- Cancers
- Heart disease and stroke
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and other lung/breathing problems
- Complications in those who are pregnant

Cigarette smoking is the largest cause of preventable illness and death in the United States. One in five deaths are caused by cigarette smoking and secondhand smoke.

Secondhand smoke is the smoke released from a burning cigarette, cigar, or pipe, as well as the smoke exhaled by the smoker. There is no safe level of secondhand smoke. It can cause harmful effects on non-smokers' health and can increase their risk of heart disease, lung cancer, and other health problems by 20-30%.

Good things happen as soon as you stop. You'll breathe easier, save money, smell better, sleep better, and have more energy for activities that ease stress and bring you

joy. You'll also be protecting your health and protecting your family and friends from secondhand smoke.



Want to Know More?

Some Veterans wonder if smoking alternatives, such as vaping or using e-cigarettes, are safer than using tobacco. These products and devices still have risks to your health and can cause harm to your body. We are still learning about the short and long-term health effects of e-cigarettes on people of all ages.

Your VA health care team can provide proven, safe, and effective treatments for stopping tobacco. Behavioral counseling and the use of FDA-approved tobacco cessation medications work together to help you stop for good. Whether it's your first time trying to stop or if you've struggled before with stopping, your VA health care team is ready to provide helpful tips, tools, and encouragement.

Find additional information and resources at VA's Prevention website using the QR code above or the link:

https://www.prevention.va.gov/Healthy_Living/Be_Tobacco_Free.asp