

## Where to Go for Help

Tobacco users who join quit-smoking groups increase their chances of successfully quitting and staying quit. Inova sponsors a free “Knock Out Nicotine” group:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays of each month
- 11:00 AM to noon
- At Inova HealthSource: 2700 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 100, Fairfax, VA 22031 (*approximately a mile from Inova Fairfax Hospital*).

Those interested can also join the support group by calling in to the meeting, like a conference call. This option allows full interaction with the group. The group welcomes those who are still smoking but hope to quit.

For more information, contact the “Knock Out Nicotine” Program Assistant at [Erin.Amendolia@inova.org](mailto:Erin.Amendolia@inova.org).

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Articles in this newsletter are not a substitute for the care and advice of medical professionals. When you have a question or need medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, consult your physician.

This newsletter is produced by Inova Health System in conjunction with your faith community. If you prefer not to receive this newsletter, please notify the appropriate personnel in your faith community.

Inova Health System is a not-for-profit health care system based in Northern Virginia that consists of hospitals and other health services including emergency and urgent care centers, home care, nursing homes, mental health, blood donor services, and wellness classes. Governed by a voluntary board of community members, Inova’s mission is to improve the health of the diverse community we serve through excellence in patient care, education and research.



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*Congregational Health Partnership is a program of Inova Community Affairs Division*



## For Your Health

### The Truth About Tobacco

Nicotine is the addictive chemical found in tobacco plants. Nicotine causes addiction, no matter what kind of tobacco product you use, or how you use it. You do not have to inhale smoke to become addicted as nicotine and other chemicals are absorbed through your mouth.

There is no safe tobacco product. Cigarettes, pipes, cigars and chewing tobacco all can be harmful to your health and can lead to lung disease, heart disease, stroke, cancer and increase your risk for pneumonia. Nicotine itself increases the speed that your heart beats and also increases your blood pressure.

Smoking cigarettes produces carbon monoxide, a poisonous gas, in your body. Smoking cigarettes also causes tar to build up in your body. There are thousands of chemicals in cigarette smoke, one of them is formaldehyde, a chemical used to preserve bodies, and also arsenic.

Cigars contain the same chemicals as cigarettes. Smoking one cigar is like smoking three to 10 cigarettes at once, depending on how big the cigar is. Unlike cigarettes, cigars do not have filters, so more tar and nicotine enter your body when you smoke, even if you don’t inhale. Breathing second hand smoke from a cigar is like smoking three cigarettes.

Cigar smokers and people who breathe in their secondhand smoke have an increased risk for more coughs, colds, sore throats and even cancer.

## The Quitting Process

Having a strategy and a quit plan will help you succeed. To begin your plan, pick a quit date. This is a special date you choose to stop using all tobacco products. Here are a few ways to approach your quit day:

- **Cold Turkey** – You abruptly stop using all tobacco products on your quit day.
- **Tapering** – You gradually lessen the amount of tobacco product consumed until you are completely tobacco-free. Starting a few days before your quit day, you can determine how much you will smoke each day, lessening the amount until your quit day.
- **Postponing**– Delaying your first tobacco usage of the day. Starting a few days before you quit date, determine a planned time delay for your first cigarette. Each day the timing of your first usage is delayed longer, until you have completely eliminated tobacco use.

Regardless of the method you choose.

**On your day– You Quit!**

## Providing Support

Once a tobacco user decides to quit, they will be more successful with the support of their friends and family.

How you can help:

- Be there when they ask for help, especially in the first 7-10 days
- Give space when they ask for it; but do not go too far away, just knowing you are around helps
- Help avoid the situations and times when they would normally smoke by offering an alternative
- Be a cheerleader– tell them they are strong, that you are proud of them, that 45 million Americans have quit and so can they

Your help **CAN** make the difference in your loved ones decision to quit smoking.

## How to Prepare in Advance

**Within 20 minutes of your last cigarette:**

- Your blood pressure, pulse rate and hand and foot temperature all start to return to normal condition

**Within 8 hours of quitting:**

- The blood carbon monoxide and blood oxygen levels both return to normal status

**Within 24 hours of quitting:**

- Your risks for developing a heart attack decreases

**After 2 days of quitting:**

- Your nerve endings start to re-grow and your smell and taste buds are enhanced

**2 weeks –3 months of quitting:**

- Your circulation is improved and you are able to walk faster and longer
- Your lung function begins to increase by up to 30%

**5 years after quitting:**

- Your risk of developing cancer of the mouth, throat and esophagus decreases by 50%
- Stroke risk continues to drop to that of a non-smoker
- Lung cancer death rate for one-pack-per-day smoker decreases by almost half

**10 years after quitting:**

- Lung cancer death rate is now similar to that of a non-smoker
- Pre-cancerous cells are replaced and the risk of mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney and pancreas cancers is decreased

**15 years after quitting:**

- Risk of coronary heart disease is that of a non-smoker