

Smoking in Australia

While smoking might be common among your friends or family, around 87% of Australians don't smoke anymore.¹

In fact, the number of people who have successfully stopped smoking is now far higher than the number of people who still smoke.¹

Smoking is the leading cause of disease and early death in Australia. Plus, people exposed to secondhand smoke are also at risk from diseases caused by smoking.²

The best thing anyone can do for their health – and the health of the people around them – is to stop smoking.

Quitting has many benefits, though, not just better health.

How will quitting help my health?

For a start, people who quit smoking report feeling less stressed, and having a better feeling of mental wellbeing.³

As soon as you stop smoking, your body starts to heal. The usual benefits are:

Within 24 hours of quitting:

- your heart rate slows
- your blood pressure becomes more stable
- the level of oxygen in your blood is higher, so exercise is easier.

Within three months:

- you will taste things better
- your sense of smell will be better
- the circulation of blood to your hands and feet improves, so they won't feel as cold
- your lungs start to clear.

Within 2–5 years:

- your risk of heart attack and stroke are greatly reduced.

Other benefits of quitting

Saving money: The average smoker spends more than \$5000 every year on cigarettes. No matter how much you smoke, quitting will save you thousands of dollars every year.

Being a good role model: Wanting to be a good role model is a common reason for people wanting to quit. Smoking around children not only hurts their health, it increases the risk they will start smoking when they are teenagers or young adults.

What do you want most from quitting?

- Feeling healthier?
- More money?
- Getting fit?
- Less stress?
- Regaining control?
- More confidence?
- All of the above? (You can do it!)

Understanding smoking

People smoke because they are addicted to the chemical nicotine. When a cigarette is finished, nicotine levels start to drop. When they drop too far, withdrawal symptoms and cravings start, and the smoker then feels they need a cigarette. This physical addiction is one reason it is difficult for some people to stop smoking.

Nicotine makes smoking feel enjoyable because it satisfies cravings and stops withdrawal symptoms. When people experience this enjoyable feeling over and over in certain situations (for example with a drink) or when feeling certain emotions (such as stress) a strong link is created between having a cigarette and that situation or emotion. These situations and emotions then become triggers that make people want to smoke. This is another reason some people find it difficult to stop.

Luckily, there are great tools around to make it easier to manage both the nicotine addiction and the triggers.

1. <http://www.tobaccoinaustralia.org.au/chapter-1-prevalence/1-3-prevalence-of-smoking-adults>

2. World Health Organization (WHO). Tobacco: Fact sheet No. 339. 2014

3. Taylor G, McNeill A, Girling A, Farley A, Lindson-Hawley N & Aveyard P. (2014). Change in mental health after smoking cessation: systematic review and meta-analysis. *British Medical Journal*, 348:g1151. doi: 10.1136/bmj.g1151

Ways to quit

Most people quit by themselves, with no products or help of any sort. However, this simply doesn't work for everybody.

Some people have strong withdrawal symptoms when they quit and some have mild symptoms. Most people feel restless, tense and irritable, and some have difficulty sleeping. All of these symptoms are signs the body is breaking its addiction to cigarettes. For many people, withdrawal symptoms last only two to four weeks. If your symptoms last longer than this or feel unbearable, see your doctor, or call Quitline for free advice.

Some people can avoid triggers to smoke, but struggle with nicotine withdrawal symptoms.

Other people can break their nicotine addiction, but struggle with the triggers, even when they have decided that they want to stop.

There are safe, effective tools available to manage withdrawal and greatly increase your chances of success.

Your best chance of success to quit⁴ is to combine:

- 1) **Products or medications for the nicotine addiction, PLUS**
- 2) **Personalised coaching for the triggers.**

Nicotine replacement products

Nicotine patches give a small steady amount of nicotine over time to take the edge off withdrawal symptoms. You can use fast-acting products (gum, lozenge or spray), as well, to help beat sudden cravings. Combining patches (which are cheaper if you have a prescription from your doctor) with a fast-acting product gives a higher chance of quitting success.

Smoking cessation medications

Quitting medications, such as Champix (Varenicline) or Zyban (Bupropion), reduce withdrawal symptoms and make smoking less satisfying. You need a prescription for these medications, so speak to your doctor about the right option for you.



Breaking triggers

Specialist coaching helps you work out your triggers and understand your unique relationship to nicotine. Coaching provides practical advice and strategies to help you plan how to quit. Your coach can help you work out your reasons for wanting to quit, which helps you with motivation, and give information and advice along the way. You can get specialist coaching, for the cost of a phone call, by calling **Quitline on 13 7848**.

For more information or to start quitting today:

Call the **Quitline on 13 7848** for specialist coaching (for the cost of a phone call).

Visit quit.org.au:

- for more information and tips from real ex-smokers
- to sign up for text messaging or online programs to help manage triggers.