

Tobacco Cessation

Use of tobacco, in any form, harms our bodies in many ways. It raises blood pressure, constricts blood vessels, and can cause cancer – not just in the lungs! People who use tobacco have higher rates of heart disease and cancers in the mouth, throat, esophagus, pancreas, bladder, liver, stomach, colon, and even certain blood cancers called leukemia. Truly, your whole body can be affected.

Because of all of these risks, tobacco use can limit your options when it comes to treating heart failure.

While quitting smoking or use of chewing tobacco is one of the hardest things most people ever do, but there are many benefits.

What happens to our body when we quit tobacco?

- 20 minutes after stopping tobacco use, heart rate and blood pressure returns to normal levels.
- 2-3 weeks after stopping, circulation improves to all parts of the body.
- Within 9 months, coughing and shortness of breath decrease.
- 1 year after, your risk of heart disease is half of that of someone who still uses tobacco.

There are lots of support options to assist in quitting:

- Some medications can be helpful. Discuss with your healthcare provider if that option is right for you.
- National Network of Tobacco Cessation Quitlines: 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or www.cdc.gov/tips
- smokefree.gov: online forum that connects you with others in same situation as you
- www.trytostop.org: Interactive online support aimed to address your needs based on your stage of quitting.

Quitting smoking is the single most important step a smoker can take to improve the length and quality of their life. Learn how to help someone you love stop smoking.

References:

American Cancer Society: <https://www.cancer.org/healthy/stay-away-from-tobacco/guide-quit-smoking.html>

American Lung Association: <https://www.lung.org/quit-smoking>

National Cancer Institute: <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/tobacco>

