

## Reasons to Quit

The answer to this question is different for everyone, but there are a plethora of general benefits that quitting smoking can have for everyone, including the smoker, their family, and society around them.

- Health Benefits
- Emotional Wellness
- Social Acceptance
- Physical Appearance and Other Visible Rewards
- Reduction in Expenses
- Health of Others

For more information about quitting smoking, refer to the page **Additional Resources**. Be sure to ask your primary care provider (PCP) about the benefits to you when you quit smoking. All full-time University of Rochester students have a primary care provider at the University Health Service (UHS). When you call 275-2662 to schedule an appointment, you will be offered an appointment with your PCP.

### HEALTH BENEFITS

For the vast majority of smokers, quitting smoking is the best thing that they can do to improve the length and quality of their lives. No matter the age of the smoker or the duration of their smoking habit, quitting can help them live a longer life. According to a 2002 report in the American Journal of Public Health, a 65-year-old woman who quits smoking can add as much as four years to her life. The study also found that those who kick their habit by age 35 tend to live, on average, about 8 ½ years longer than those who continued to smoke.

### EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

When someone has an illness, no matter what it may be, they may feel like they have lost control of their body. An addiction to smoking is an illness, and it evokes a loss self-control that is difficult to regain until you have kicked the habit. Take your opportunity to quit smoking as overcoming a challenge, because you will remember the exact day that you quit smoking as a source of great pride and accomplishment. Cigarettes will no longer control your life, and you can set a great example for children and others around you.

### SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE

You may see pictures all over the media portraying smoking as some sort of "attractive habit." However, smoking is less socially acceptable now than it ever was in the past. If you ask smokers why they started smoking, the majority of them, especially those that began during their school years, will say they did it to "fit in."

With the enactment of the new smoking legislation in New York State, it is now illegal to smoke in all public buildings, including restaurants and bars. The University of Rochester has also implemented a smoke-free policy in its residence halls, beginning with freshmen residence halls in September 2003.

It has become commonplace in many industries to hire employees who are non-smokers. Studies show that smoking employees cost business more to employ them because they tend to "call in sick" more frequently. This raises the employer's cost for substitute workers, as well as the insurance premiums for company-sponsored health insurance benefit programs. Smokers in a working environment also raise the maintenance costs for the employer in order to remove the odors of cigarette smoke, as well as the residue that it leaves behind. Finding residences has

also become a difficulty for smokers. Many landlords choose not to rent to smokers since maintenance costs and insurance rates for their properties are increased when a smoker lives there.

Smoking may inhibit you from keeping strong relationships with your friends and take away the opportunities you would otherwise have for dating or romantic involvement. Friends and acquaintances may ask you to not smoke in their homes and cars, and could even possibly leave an outdoor social situation when you light up a cigarette. Finding someone to share your time with may become limited to only other smokers, which is becoming more and more difficult since only ¼ of the population now smokes. When you quit smoking, the people around you will respect you even more, and you won't have to always feel guilty when they nag you about when you are going to quit.

### PHYSICAL APPEARANCE & OTHER VISIBLE REWARDS

Smoking has detrimental effects on the looks of a person, and quitting smoking can have immediate visible rewards on the body.

Quitting smoking helps stop the damaging effects of tobacco and tar on your appearance, which can include:

- Wrinkling of the skin and the appearance of premature aging
- Halitosis, commonly known as bad breath
- Yellow teeth and fingers
- Gum disease
- Clothes with the odor of smoke

Other immediate benefits that can improve your day-to-day life once you are smoke free may include:

- An increase in your sense of taste and smell, allowing food to taste better
- An increase in energy and stamina
- The ability to perform general household activities with more ease
- An increased curiosity about trying new and different activities with those around you, such as picking up a new hobby, beginning a workout routine, or simply enjoying some alone time without a cigarette to accompany you.

### REDUCTION IN EXPENSES

A smoking habit is incredibly expensive. There is more to smoking than just buying the cigarettes, which are now more expensive than ever. Between buying cigarettes, lighters, matches, ashtrays, car fresheners, etc., the average economic costs of smoking are estimated to be approximately \$3,391 per smoker per year (as reported by the American Cancer Society). Imagine what you could do with the money that you saved from just not smoking - go on a vacation, buy a new computer, make a down payment on a new vehicle, save for college, and so on.

Other costs go down once you quit smoking, as well. Laundry, carpet, and furniture cleaning costs will drop substantially; the re-sale value of your home or car may increase; and you can save money on buying new clothes since they last longer without all of the effects of cigarette smoke or burns on them. Health, life, and homeowner's/renter's insurance premiums may also drop once you quit smoking.

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## HEALTH OF OTHERS

Not only is smoking unhealthy for the smoker, but the people around them are being harmed as well. Exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (also known as ETS, which is commonly referred to as secondhand smoke) includes exhaled smoke along with the smoke from burning cigarettes. Research has proven that ETS can cause lung cancer, emphysema, and many more diseases in those who do not smoke, as well as those who do. Environmental tobacco smoke is also known to cause eye irritation, headaches, nausea, and dizziness.

The health problems in children of mothers who smoke are numerous. ETS, or secondhand smoke, is linked to sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), low birth-weight babies, and asthma, all more common when the mother smokes during her pregnancy as well as afterwards. Children raised in homes in which people smoke are known to have more throat and ear infections, colds, bronchitis, pneumonia, and other respiratory illnesses than children who are raised in nonsmoking homes.

## HEALTH BENEFITS OF QUITTING SMOKING

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The majority of people know that smoking can cause lung cancer, but very few people realize exactly how many other health problems are associated with smoking.

The following are a few of the health problems resulting from smoking:

Allergies	Gangrene	Lymphomas
Arteriosclerosis	Gum disease	Mouth cancer
Asthma attacks	Halitosis (bad breath)	Osteoporosis
Buerger's Disease	Heart disease	Pancreatic cancer
Bladder cancer	Hypertension	Raynaud's Syndrome
Burns	Kidney cancer	Reduced immunity
Cataracts	Infertility	Stroke
Circulatory deficiencies	Laryngeal cancer	Tooth stains
Emphysema	Leukoplakia	Tooth loss
Esophageal cancer	Lung cancer	Ulcers
Poorer prognosis for survival after surgery		
Upper respiratory diseases (colds, flu, sinus infections, bronchitis, pneumonia)		

For women who smoke, there are several unique risks that should be recognized. Women who are over 35 years of age who smoke and are using oral contraception put themselves at higher risk for heart attacks, stroke, and blood clots in the legs. Women who smoke are also much more likely to have a miscarriage, give birth to premature or low birth-weight babies, and have babies with several life-hindering birth defects. Women who quit smoking before becoming pregnant or during their first trimester can reduce these risks to the same level as women who do not smoke.

## SCHEDULING AN APPOINTMENT

Call 275-2662 to schedule an appointment at the University Health Service (UHS). UHS offers a full range of services. All visits to UHS are confidential.

## RELATED HEALTH LINKS

**American Cancer Society:** General information about cancer with statistical data. Can be useful for families, health care professionals, and cancer survivors. [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

**American Heart Association:** Comprehensive information on heart related diseases and activities of the AHA. [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)

**American Lung Association:** Focuses on asthma, tobacco control, and environmental health. Offers the Freedom From Smoking written guide, audiocassette program, and other information on local group clinics and online programs. [www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org)

**National Institutes of Health:** A broad source of medical information. [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov)

**New York State Department of Health:** New York State Department of Health Website with a direct link to the New York State Smokers' Quitsite. [www.health.state.ny.us](http://www.health.state.ny.us)