

## SINAI HEALTH LINK

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# HEALTHLINK

1-888-AT-SINAI (1-888-287-4624)

## STOP SMOKING YOUR LIFE MAY DEPEND ON IT

**W**ant to cut your chances of a heart attack or stroke in half? You can – if you quit smoking. You’ll also slash your risk of lung cancer, emphysema and other deadly diseases.

“Smoking takes 8 to 10 years off your life,” says Stuart Kiken, MD, director of ambulatory care at Mount Sinai Hospital in Chicago. “It’s the leading cause of early death.”

People are doing something about it, though. About 40 million Americans have quit. Each one made the decision to do it.

“If somebody doesn’t want to quit, they won’t,” Dr. Kiken says. They have to be committed to succeed.

“Most people try three or four times before they succeed,” Dr. Kiken says. “But the ones who stick to it usually win.”

Once you decide, you don’t have to quit on the spot. Pick a “quit date” within two weeks. Then tell your family, friends and co-workers so they’ll support you.

Get rid of cigarettes in your house, your car, your workplace – anywhere you spend a lot of time. Then switch to a brand with less nicotine.

When your quit date comes, stop completely.

Don’t take a single puff. That’s the best way to deal with the two things that make it hard to quit smoking. The first is your addiction to nicotine. When you don’t smoke at all, you usually get past that quickly. The second is the habit of smoking. You’re used to it, and you like it. If you light up even once after you quit, that pattern could start again.

Dr. Kiken says people shouldn’t drink when they are trying to quit smoking. Drinking makes it harder to keep your commitment, and many people are in the habit of drinking and smoking at the same time.

Quitting can be tough, but you don’t have to do it alone. Ask for support from your family and friends.

Groups and classes also help. And medicine can make the whole process easier. Nicotine patches and gum can help cut your craving. They’re available over the counter at drug-stores. There’s also a pill can help you get past the feeling you “need” a cigarette. Your doctor has to prescribe that.

It takes work to quit smoking, but it is the most important thing you can do for your health.

“The stakes are high,” Dr. Kiken says, “but the payoff is great.”



**FOR INFORMATION ON STOP SMOKING PROGRAMS AT SINAI,  
CALL 1-888-AT-SINAI (1-888-287-4624) OR 773-257-6289 (TTY).**

## Breathe Easier with Sinai

It was your decision to quit smoking, but you don't have to do it alone. Sinai offers free classes to help smokers stop.

Each session meets 1½ hours a week for four weeks. New programs start each month. A seven-week program is offered in Spanish.



At the classes, people talk about their smoking habits. They learn about the health hazards of smoking, and why it is so addictive. Doctors and other Sinai staff offer tips, answer questions, and help each person come up with a plan to quit.

Most important, the classes offer support.

To find out more about Sinai's Stop Smoking programs, call **1-888-AT-SINAI (1-888-287-4624)**.

## STAY STOPPED



Here are 10 tips from the American Cancer Society to help you stop smoking.

- For the first few days after you quit, spend lots of time in places where you are not allowed to smoke – schools, libraries, museums and other public places.
- Stay away from places where you enjoyed smoking.
- Drink lots of water and fruit juice.
- Take deep breaths similar to smoking to relax.
- Think positive thoughts.
- Brush your teeth.
- Call a friend. Call lots of friends.
- Light a candle, instead of a cigarette.
- If you miss having a cigarette in your hand, play with a pencil or paperclip.
- Don't think one cigarette won't hurt. It will.

## Ask Your Sinai Doctor

**Q.** *I am pregnant and want to stop smoking to help my unborn baby. Should I use a nicotine patch?*

**A.** Nicotine patches and other replacements reduce withdrawal symptoms and cravings when you quit, but pregnant women shouldn't use them. Nicotine – whether from a cigarette or a patch – can hurt your baby.

Patches also can be dangerous for people who recently had a heart attack, and people with other heart problems.

Ask your doctor about getting a prescription to reduce withdrawal symptoms. Even better is joining a stop-smoking support group, like the one offered each month at Mount Sinai Hospital.



**For information on Sinai health and community services, call 1-888-AT-SINAI (1-888-287-4624); TTY (773) 257-6289.**