



Q: I've quit other habits in the past, but this one seems harder. Why?

A: Cigarettes deliver the “free-base” form of nicotine to the brain. Just like crack cocaine is more addictive than plain cocaine, free base nicotine is much more powerful than plain nicotine. That’s why even the idea of giving up cigarettes can be so depressing. The good news is that, unlike many other drugs, nicotine addiction can be treated fairly easily and effectively. Ask for help. You don’t just deserve to quit, you deserve to quit well.

Cigarettes deliver the free-base form of nicotine.

Q: Where do I get help?

A: There’s lots of help available. As a result of the tobacco settlement, Pennsylvania has invested several resources to help you quit comfortably. You can call Pennsylvania’s Toll Free Quit Line to get advice on how to quit or to check on the location of the community cessation program nearest you. You can also call us at the Smoking Treatment Program to find out more about our treatment partnerships in the North and Northeast communities.

Comprehensive Smoking Treatment Program Locations

Penn Presbyterian Medical Center
Philadelphia Heart Institute, First Floor
51 N. 39th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Perelman Center for Advanced Medicine
West Pavilion, First Floor
3400 Civic Center Boulevard
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Contact Us

For an appointment or more information about quitting or quit smoking programs, please call 888.PENN.STOP (888.736.6786).

Additional Resources

Pennsylvania’s Free Quitline
800.QUIT.NOW (800.784.8669)

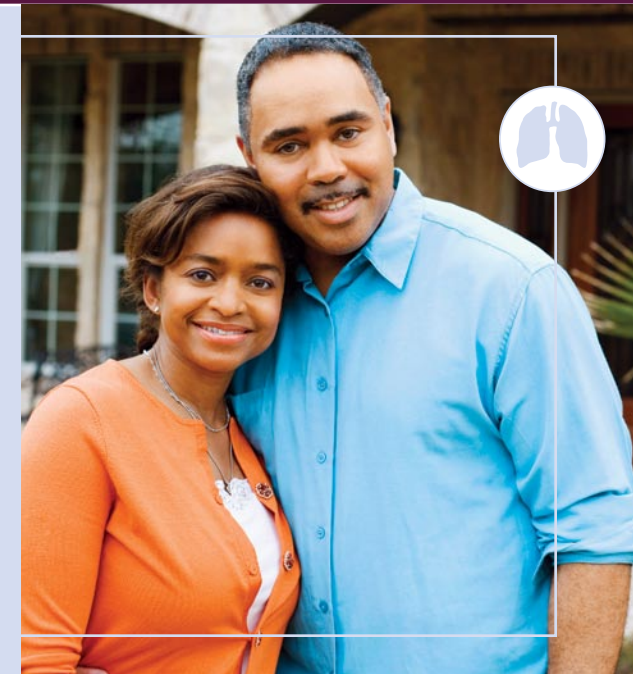
Smoke Free Philly Quitline
215.683.LIVE

Sponsored by the Comprehensive Smoking Treatment Program, University of Pennsylvania, Penn Presbyterian Medical Center.



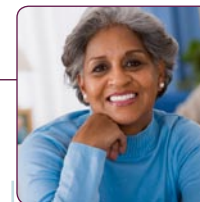
Why is it so hard to
QUIT SMOKING?

Answers to common questions about nicotine dependence



QUIT SMOKING.

Be safe. Be Comfortable.



Q: I watched my mom struggle and die with lung cancer from smoking, but I'm still not scared enough to quit. How is that even possible?

A: Motivation to quit is complicated. It's not because you don't understand how bad smoking is for you. And it's not because you don't care about your health. It's because nicotine is a powerfully addictive drug that is capable of motivating us to keep using, more so than even alcohol or heroin. The fact that you can keep smoking despite your experience is not a function of how weak you are, it's a function of how powerful nicotine is.

How is it possible?

Q: Whenever I think about quitting, I get this uneasy feeling in the pit of my stomach. What's going on?

A: Most smokers know smoking is not good for them. But their gut instincts tell them quitting is a bad idea. That sets up a conflict that many smokers deal with for decades... wanting to quit but not wanting to quit at the same time! This can result in feelings of shame, embarrassment, and a fear of failure.

Q: Why is smoking so satisfying?

A: Believe it or not, smoking is enjoyable for smokers. The cigarette is the easiest way to deliver nicotine to the brain, and nicotine is one of the most powerful drugs creating satisfaction. It works so well because it turns on the "gut instinct" part of the brain, and that instinct tells the smoker they're safe, comfortable and content when nicotine is around.

Does this mean I'll never quit?

Q: I once quit for over 6 months but then went back. I had to be over the addiction by then, right?

A: While nicotine leaves your system within a few days of quitting, the effects of nicotine on your brain are more long lasting than that. Your brain needs time to heal, sometimes up to a few years. During that time, it's not uncommon to feel a subtle desire to pick up a cigarette. A slip is not a sign of weakness, but rather a sign that your brain hasn't finished healing yet.

A slip doesn't mean you are a smoker again. It is simply the time to ask for help and get back to quitting.

Less than 5% of smokers will quit without help.

Q: How hard is it to quit without help?

A: Very few smokers who try to quit without help are successful. Nicotine changes the way the brain works. Nicotine is more addictive than alcohol, heroine or cocaine.

Quitting smoking is not just about breaking a bad habit and it is certainly not just about willpower. Even those of us who are able to put cigarettes down, find it difficult to stay off. The more help you get, the easier it will be to remain smoke free.

Why do people smoke?

Q: Everybody knows smoking is bad for you. Why do people still do it?

A: Smoking is a complicated thing. Smokers feel that smoking is important for many reasons. It can help them feel more comfortable with their friends. Some use cigarettes to help control weight. A very common feeling is that smoking helps to relieve stress by helping people feel relaxed and satisfied.