

## Effects of Smoking and How to Quit

This brochure is designed to provide you with information on the effects of smoking on health, particularly oral health, and to offer guidance and support if you wish to quit smoking. Quitting smoking is always beneficial, regardless of age.

### The most significant effects of smoking on overall health:

- **Cardiovascular Diseases:** Smoking increases blood pressure, narrows blood vessels, and raises the risk of heart attacks and strokes. Smoking also causes erectile dysfunction.
- **Respiratory Diseases:** Smoking is the primary cause of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and lung cancer.
- **Cancer Risk:** Smoking increases the risk of various cancers, including lung, oral, throat, pancreatic, bladder, and ovarian cancer.

### Effects of Smoking on Oral Health:

- **Gum Diseases:** Smoking is one of the most significant risk factors for severe gum disease, or periodontitis. Smoking impairs the circulation in the gums, which complicates the healing of inflammation. This might give the illusion that the gums are healthy when they do not bleed as they typically would during gum disease. Moreover, smoking often dries out the mouth, which in turn increases the risk of tooth decay.
- **Oral Cancer:** Smoking significantly increases the risk of cancers of the oral mucosa, tongue, and larynx. The risk is further increased by the simultaneous use of snuff and alcohol.
- **Teeth and Oral Mucosa:** Smoking often causes tooth discoloration, mucosal redness, and bad breath.

## How to Quit Smoking:

1. **Decision:** Make a personal commitment to stop smoking on a day you've chosen.
2. **Support and Advice:** Inform your family, friends, and colleagues about your decision and ask for their support. Also consider consulting a healthcare professional, such as a doctor or dentist. You can also look for smoking cessation support groups.
3. **Replacement Therapy and Medication:** Nicotine replacement therapies (patches, gums, lozenges) and prescription medications can help reduce withdrawal symptoms.
4. **Avoid Triggers:** Recognize situations and emotions that make you want to smoke and develop strategies to avoid them or alternative actions.
5. **Increase Exercise and Hobbies:** Physical activity can help manage withdrawal symptoms after quitting smoking and potential mild weight gain.
6. **Reward Yourself:** Set goals and reward yourself for your achievements along the way, for example, with the money you save.

## Benefits of Quitting Smoking:

- **Within a day:** Blood pressure and pulse drop, and blood carbon monoxide level normalizes.
- **Within the first weeks and months:** Circulation and lung function improve, and coughing decreases.
- **Over the years:** The risks of heart disease, heart attack, stroke, and cancer decrease.

**Remember, help is available.** Your dentist or doctor can provide you with more information and support in quitting smoking.