



UAMS HELPS YOU GO SMOKE FREE.

For more information on the smoking cessation program, call Porbeck at 686-7524 or go online at www.uams.edu/smokefree.

Frequently Asked Questions About Quitting Smoking

Four Levels To Get Smoke Free

The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, in conjunction with the “Get Healthy UAMS” campaign designed to promote healthier lifestyle choices, will be completely smoke free as of July 4. A four-level smoking cessation program will go into effect beginning April 1 to help UAMS staff, faculty and students quit smoking, with Sue Porbeck, smoke-free coordinator in Human Resources overseeing the program.

The levels differ in the amount of assistance provided. Level 1 involves six weeks of over-the-counter nicotine replacement therapy provided at no charge. Level 2 includes printed materials focusing on smoking cessation, use of the Arkansas Department of Health’s Quit Line and an assessment for alternative nicotine replacement therapy. Level 3 will provide the same materials as the first two levels with the addition of smoking cessation counseling in conjunction with the Employee Assistance Program. All of these levels will be offered at no charge to employees and students.

Level 4 is designed to help those individuals who need the most help quitting smoking. This level includes prescription drug management, behavior modification, lung-function tests and a six-week membership at War Memorial Fitness Center. The cost of Level 4 is \$15 for employees and students, \$25 for each family member.

1. Is there a safe way to smoke?

No. All cigarettes can damage the human body. Any amount of smoke is dangerous. Cigarettes are perhaps the only legal product whose advertised and intended use—smoking—is harmful to the body and causes cancer.

Although some people try to make their smoking habit safer by smoking fewer cigarettes, most smokers find that hard to do. Some people think that switching from high tar and nicotine cigarettes to those with low tar and nicotine content makes smoking safer, but this is not always true. When people switch to lower tar and nicotine brands, they often smoke more cigarettes or more of each cigarette to get the same nicotine dose as before.

A low-tar cigarette can be just as harmful as a high-tar cigarette when a person takes deeper puffs, puffs more frequently, or smokes cigarettes to a shorter butt length. Even if smokers who switch to lower tar brands do not make these changes to compensate, the health benefits are very small when compared to the benefits of quitting for good.

2. What are the chances that smoking will kill you?

Based on current smoking patterns, smoking will kill about 500 million people alive in the world today. Tobacco-caused deaths worldwide are expected to increase from about 4 million per year today to about 10 million per year by the 2030s. Most of these deaths will occur in developing countries.

In the US, tobacco causes nearly 1 in 5 deaths, killing more than 440,000 Americans each year. Smoking is the single most preventable cause of death in our society.

3. What are some of the short- and long-term effects of smoking cigarettes?

Smoking causes many types of cancer, which may not develop for years. The truth is cigarette smokers die younger than non-smokers. In fact, according to a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) study conducted in the late 1990s, smoking shortened male smokers’ lives by 13.2 years and female smokers’ lives by 14.5 years. Both men and women who smoke are much more likely to die during middle age (between the ages of 35 and 69) compared to those who have never smoked.

There are many more short-term effects of smoking. A major consequence of smoking is decreased lung function. Because of this smokers often suffer from shortness of breath, nagging coughing, or tiring easily during strenuous physical activity. Smoking also diminishes the ability to smell and taste and causes premature aging of skin.

4. Can quitting really help a lifelong smoker?

Yes. It is never too late to quit. The sooner smokers quit, the more they can reduce their chances of getting cancer and other diseases. Within 20 minutes of smoking the last cigarette, the body begins to restore itself.

- After 20 minutes: Your blood pressure drops to a level close to that before the last cigarette. The temperature of your hands and feet increases to normal. (*Surgeon General’s Report, 1988, pp. 39, 202*)
- After 8 hours: The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal. (*Surgeon General’s Report, 1988, p. 202*)

- After 24 hours: Your chance of a heart attack decreases. (*Surgeon General's Report, 1988, p. 202*)

- In 1 to 9 months: Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, and shortness of breath decrease; cilia (tiny hair like structures that move mucus out of the lungs) regain normal function in the lungs, increasing the ability to handle mucus, clean the lungs, and reduce infection. (*Surgeon General's Report, 1990, pp. 304, 307, 319, 322*)

- After 1 year: The excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's. (*Surgeon General's Report, 1990, p. vi*)

- After 5: Your stroke risk is reduced to that of a nonsmoker. (*Surgeon General's Report, 1990, p.79*)

- After 10 years: The lung cancer death rate is about half that of a continuing smoker's. The risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney, and pancreas decreases. (*Surgeon General's Report, 1990, p.110, 147, 152, 155, 159,172*)

- After 15 years: The risk of coronary heart disease is that of a nonsmoker's. (*Surgeon General's Report, 1990, p.79*)

5. Are chewing tobacco and snuff safe alternatives to cigarette smoking?

Smokeless tobacco contains nicotine. The amount of nicotine absorbed is usually more than the amount delivered by a cigarette. Overall, people who dip or chew receive about the same amount of nicotine as regular smokers. The most harmful cancer-causing substances in smokeless tobacco are tobacco-specific nitrosamines (TSNAs), which have been found at levels 100 times higher than thenitrosamines that are allowed in bacon, beer, and other foods.

The juice from the smokeless tobacco is absorbed directly through the lining of the mouth. This creates sores and white patches that often lead to cancer of the mouth. (*Information provided by the American Cancer Society.*)

Former Smoker Saving More Than Just Money



Sue Porbeck, UAMS Smoke Free Coordinator, checks blood pressure of Kenny Prince.

Kenny Prince always knew that smoking was bad for him, but he never found a reason to give up the habit until recently.

“My daughter’s 10, and I coach her softball team. I noticed that when I was running around the field I had a problem breathing,” admitted Prince, who works as a printer in Media Services’ print shop. The fact that UAMS will not allow smoking at any location on campus beginning July 4 was an additional motive in Prince’s decision to give up smoking altogether.

“I guess it was peer pressure that made me smoke,” said Prince, 39, who has smoked nearly half his life. “I was running around with friends that smoked and it seemed like the thing to do.”

Prince is currently undergoing cessation counseling offered to UAMS staff, faculty and students as part of the “Get Healthy UAMS” project. Under the Level 4 program, Prince paid \$15 to enroll in cessation training sessions held weekly. He also received a prescription for a medication that helped rid him of his cravings for cigarettes.

After undergoing almost two weeks of therapy, Prince chose Feb. 14, Valentine’s Day, as his target date to quit smoking. He has not had a cigarette since and says he rarely even thinks about lighting up since he kicked the habit. “I’ve had a few moments where I wanted (a cigarette),” he said. “Especially when I was driving or after

eating. But I really don’t think about it anymore. There’s something about it that was nice, but it’s nicer feeling better.”

Being dependent on cigarettes was another reason for wanting to quit, he added. “I was tired of always needing cigarettes everywhere I went, always wondering if I had enough, always have to run out and buy more. I was a slave to them, and I’m glad it’s gone.”

Prince has noticed a number of changes in his life since he quit smoking. “It’s amazing how good you feel when you quit. After 15 years, I breathe so much better. My taste buds, my sense of smell, all of that is 100 percent better. And my kids are happier with me, that’s the biggest thing.”

A former pack-a-day smoker, Prince was spending \$3 a day on cigarettes, smoking some 20 a day. A Pittsburgh Steelers fan, he plans to use some of the money he is saving from not buying cigarettes to buy tickets for an upcoming game with the Cowboys in Dallas.

“A pack a day, that’s 600 cigarettes a month,” said Prince. “That’s a lot of money, but you don’t really look at that stuff when you smoke. That makes you think and as a smoker, you don’t want to do that math.”

In Arkansas 5,200 people die each year from tobacco use. Approximately 575 die from second-hand smoke.

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