



Your Health and Smoking

How do you know when smoking is an issue?

Each cigarette contains approximately 1mg of nicotine and 4,000 other dangerous chemicals, 200 of which can cause cancer. Each puff reduces the length of your life. **One cigarette per day is one too many!** Smoking is an issue when it takes over a person's life — when it becomes a “must have” item.

How smoking affects your health?

In Arizona, people with Serious Mental Illness die about 32 years earlier than the average person largely due to preventable conditions like heart disease, cancer and stroke. Many of these preventable conditions are caused by tobacco use.

Cigarettes contain cancer causing elements and can cause chronic diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, heart disease and stroke. While the dangers are well known, the warnings are often ignored.

Cigarettes and other forms of tobacco can have a calming/relaxing effect and are often used as self medication. This self medication is often an easy form of relief for people diagnosed with mental illness or recovering from a mental or behavioral disorder. It helps to bring comfort to the person — even if it is a brief time of comfort.

A person with mental illness is five times more likely than the average person to use tobacco. The tobacco addiction is not only strong, but it can also be more challenging to quit due to potential side effects of mixing nicotine replacement therapies (NRT) with other medications, instability related to withdrawal, fear of failure and fear of losing one's identity.

Quitting Tips

The average person makes 8 – 11 attempts to quit smoking before completely quitting...so don't give up!

- Start by developing a quit plan – pick a date to start.
- Don't do it alone! Call the Arizona Smoker's Helpline at 1-800-55-66-222 or visit www.ASHLine.org for help
- Remove all tobacco and related items (ashtrays, lighters) from your home and car
- Be aware of your “triggers” (habits that may induce smoking) like stress
- Keep busy (distract your mind)
- Fight the cravings (they only last a minute) — go for a walk, chew gum, call a friend, etc. to distract yourself until the craving passes
- Prepare to cope with your withdrawal symptoms
- Understand that it may take more than one attempt to quit
- Realize the health and wellness benefits of being tobacco free — benefits of better health happen almost immediately when you quit
- Plan how you will spend the money you save by not buying tobacco!

CHEW is tobacco TOO! – The steps above will help you quitting any tobacco use.



REASONS TO QUIT

- Improved health
- Food tastes better
- Improved sense of smell
- Money saved
- Better self image
- Set a good example for your kids and others
- Feel better physically
- Reduce wrinkling/aging of skin

ONLINE TOOLS

Online tools include cost savings calculators, quitting tips, withdrawal symptoms, an online quitting plan, and stories about others' quit attempts...

▶ www.ASHLine.org

Arizona Smokers' Helpline
(toll-free) 1-800-55-66-222

Questions to ask your behavioral health provider and medical doctor:

- Are any of my health conditions related to my tobacco use?
- Can any of my conditions be improved by quitting?
- Am I at risk of developing other conditions because of my smoking?
- Do any of the medications I take conflict with Nicotine Replacement Therapy?



This flyer, its sources and related materials can be found at:
www.azdhs.gov/bhs/qhi/index.htm