



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Successful Quitting

Quitting Smoking Among Adults — United States, 2000-2015

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[Announcer] *This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

[Latoya Simmons] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm Latoya Simmons, filling in for your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Quitting smoking is a major challenge for many people. Seeking help and using proven techniques can improve your chances of quitting for good.

Steve Babb is a researcher with CDC's Office on Smoking and Health. He's joining us today to discuss ways to successfully quit smoking. Welcome to the show, Steve.

[Steve Babb] Thank you.

[Latoya Simmons] Steve, are more smokers quitting now than in the past?

[Steve Babb] The proportion of smokers who quit has increased modestly over time. More importantly, almost three in five adults who ever smoked have quit. This shows that, despite the challenges that smokers face in quitting, we are making progress in increasing the number of smokers who quit.

[Latoya Simmons] Why do many smokers find it so difficult to quit?

[Steve Babb] Cigarettes and other tobacco products contain nicotine which is a highly addictive drug. As a result of their addiction to nicotine, smokers who try to quit experience withdrawal symptoms and urges to smoke that make it hard for them to quit. Because smoking is so addictive, many smokers who try to quit relapse and go back to smoking again.

[Latoya Simmons] What can a doctor or other health care provider do to help smokers quit?

[Steve Babb] Health care providers can motivate their patients to quit smoking by telling them in a personalized way how important quitting smoking is to their health. Providers can also directly give smokers counseling or refer them to other sources of counseling, such as a telephone quit line. Finally, providers can recommend or prescribe cessation medications for patients, based on their histories and needs and explain how to use these medications correctly.

[Latoya Simmons] What other things can smokers do to improve their chances of quitting?

[Steve Babb] Cessation counseling and cessation medications each improve smokers' chances of quitting for good. *Combining* counseling and medications further improves their chances. Individual, group, and telephone counseling are effective in helping smokers quit, as are seven FDA-approved cessation medications. Telling your family and friends that you are trying to quit and getting their support also increases your chances of quitting for good.

[Latoya Simmons] Is there anything else you'd like to share with our listeners?

[Steve Babb] It's important for smokers to try to quit and to keep trying. You can't quit if you don't try. Because smoking's addictive, most smokers try multiple times before they finally succeed. Some smokers may be so intimidated by how hard it is to quit, that they don't even try. But it's important to remember that almost three of every five adults who ever smoked have quit. By not giving up and learning from what worked and didn't work in their past quit attempts, smokers can eventually succeed in quitting for good.

Another key to quitting successfully is finding a strong, personal motivation for giving up cigarettes. Examples include being there for your partner or family or setting a healthy example for your children. Once you have identified a motivation, you can focus on it to quit for good.

[Latoya Simmons] Steve, where can listeners get more information about ways to quit smoking?

[Steve Babb] Listeners can call 1-800-QUIT-NOW for free help quitting. Calling this number routes callers to their state quit lines where they can receive personalized counseling from a trained coach. Listeners can also visit smokefree.gov which contains step-by-step practical information on how to quit.

[Latoya Simmons] Thanks, Steve. I've been talking today with Steve Babb about strategies for successfully quitting smoking. If you're a smoker, ask your health care provider for strategies and cessation techniques that will give you the best chance to break an addiction that's a serious threat to your health.

Until next time, be well. This is Latoya Simmons for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.