



Scan with your
phone camera for
a digital copy of
this handout.

Quitting Smoking Before Your Transplant

This handout explains how using tobacco can impact your health and success as a transplant patient. It includes resources to help you stop smoking.

Tobacco Use and Your Transplant

You have probably heard that smoking causes cancer. According to the American Cancer Society, smoking causes 80% of all lung cancers. Smokeless tobacco can also cause cancer and is not a safer choice than cigarettes. This includes chew, snuff, dip, and e-cigarettes/vaping.

We highly encourage all patients to stop using tobacco products. Quitting tobacco will improve your health and the chances of a successful transplant.

Before your transplant we will test your urine for drugs including *nicotine* and *cotinine*. These are chemicals found in tobacco products. If your medical tests show that you have heart or lung problems, you must stop smoking. We will check your test results regularly to make sure you are on track with your health and smoking goals.

Why should I stop smoking?

- Smoking can damage your blood vessels, which can make transplant surgery more dangerous.
- Nicotine can make your immunosuppression medicines less effective. This increases your risk of organ rejection after transplant.
- Patients who smoke are more likely to develop problems after their transplant surgery, including:
 - Cancer
 - Infections
 - Problems with wound healing
 - Pneumonia
 - Extended time on a ventilator

Why is it difficult to stop smoking?

It is hard to stop smoking because people develop an *addiction* to cigarettes. An addiction is a strong physical or mental need to do something.

Cigarettes, chew, and e-cigarettes contain *nicotine*. This chemical makes you feel good. Over time you need to keep using more nicotine to keep having that pleasant feeling.

Stopping tobacco can be challenging as your body begins to have cravings to smoke or chew. This is called *withdrawal*, and it can last 2 to 4 weeks. During withdrawal you may have these symptoms:

- Feeling restless or unable to concentrate
- Headaches and/or dizziness
- Mood changes
- Increase in appetite
- Constipation.

These symptoms will gradually go away as you stay tobacco-free.

Resources for Quitting Tobacco Products

We encourage all transplant candidates to stop using all forms of nicotine. Please know there are resources available to support you, as we know this will be challenging. The list below includes resources and ways to stay on track with your goals:

- Ask your doctor about medication options such as:
 - nicotine replacement therapy, such as chewing gum or a patch.
 - prescription medications which help to decrease nicotine cravings.
- 800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669) is a free telephone hotline for support and counseling.
- Join an online stop-smoking program.
- Avoid activities and situations where you used to smoke.
- Chew on sugarless gum or hard candy.
- Focus on your goal! Quitting tobacco will save you money and significantly improve your health.