

QUITTING SMOKING

The best thing a smoker can do for their health is to quit smoking. There are health benefits of quitting for all smokers, regardless of age, sex or length of time that they have been smoking. People who have already developed smoking-related health problems, like heart disease, can still benefit from quitting.

The Quitline is a 24-hour, seven-days, telephone service that offers free personalised assistance to smokers and former smokers interested in quitting or staying quit. Callers can access this by ringing 13 7848 ('13-QUIT'). The call is the cost of a local call, with higher costs for mobile phones.

Nicotine withdrawal is usually worst in the first 24-48 hours of quitting. Few people experience all the symptoms and they don't all happen at once. The symptoms are normal, and will gradually decline in intensity, with the worst usually over after a couple of weeks.

Here are some ideas to help you with quitting:

- Set a realistic quit date and stick to it
- Identify why and where you smoke and what 'triggers' you to want to smoke
- Develop coping strategies for 'trigger' situations
- Review past quitting attempts and learn from them
- Write a list of reasons for quitting and display somewhere you'll see it often
- Tell everyone you are quitting - you'll need their support
- Throw out cigarettes, lighters and ashtrays the day before you quit
- Reward yourself for not smoking
- Consider use of pharmacotherapy, like patches or gum etc
- Contact the Quitline on 13 7848 ('13-QUIT')