



# Be Smoke-Free This Month

**CHALLENGE**  
Avoid  
Secondhand  
Smoke. If You  
Smoke, Quit.

## Requirements to complete this WELLNESS CHALLENGE

1. Make it a priority to avoid all secondhand smoke.
2. If you smoke, keep a written record of how many cigarettes, cigars, and/or pipes you smoke each day.
3. If you don't smoke and are never around secondhand smoke, share the information in this Wellness Challenge with at least 2 other people this month.
4. Read "What Is Secondhand Smoke?" and "What if You Smoke?"
5. To complete the Challenge, you must avoid secondhand smoke on at least 22 days this month. If you smoke, do not smoke for at least 22 days this month – preferably the last 22.
6. Keep records of your completed Challenge in case your organization requires documentation.

## What Is Secondhand Smoke?

Secondhand smoke is the mixture of smoke that comes from the burning end of a cigarette, pipe, or cigar, and smoke exhaled by the smoker. It is a complex mixture of over 4,000 compounds, more than 40 of which are known to cause cancer and many of which are strong irritants. Exposure to secondhand smoke is often called "passive smoking."

The danger from passive smoking is as high as one-third that of actively smoking. According to the American Lung Association, secondhand smoke:

- Causes about 3,000 deaths each year from lung cancer in nonsmokers
- Causes irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat
- Can irritate the lungs, leading to coughing, excessive phlegm, and chest discomfort
- Has been estimated to cause an average of 46,000 deaths per year from heart disease in adult nonsmokers
- Increases health hazards for unborn children, sudden infant deaths, and allergy and respiratory infections in young children
- Increases the risk of lung cancer to non-smoking spouses by at least 30%

## To protect yourself and your loved ones from secondhand smoke:

- Don't let people smoke in your home or car. If someone absolutely must smoke, politely ask them to do so outside – away from windows and doors.
- Choose restaurants, hotels, and rental cars that are smoke-free.
- Sit in nonsmoking sections of airports, shopping malls, stadiums, and other public areas.
- If you are in an environment where people are smoking – and you cannot leave – open windows or use exhaust fans to help send the smoke outside. This will reduce, but not eliminate, your exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Ask your employer to make sure you do not have to breathe other people's smoke at work.
- If family members smoke, ask them to think about quitting.

### Know the Risk

Smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke claims an estimated 438,000 American lives each year. Read more about secondhand smoke in the 2006 Surgeon General's Report – The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: [www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/sgr\\_2006/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/sgr_2006/index.htm)

## What if You Smoke?

- Cigarette smoking is related to increased risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, and lung cancer.
- Cigars contain the same addictive, toxic, and carcinogenic compounds found in cigarettes. In fact, a single large cigar can contain as much tobacco as an entire pack of cigarettes.

Research shows that stopping makes a significant difference. Consider the health advantages of quitting:

**Personal health.** Your blood pressure will drop, circulation will improve, and lung function will increase. Your risk of heart disease and stroke will plummet, and the risk of cancer of the lung, mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, cervix, and pancreas will decrease. You'll have healthier bones. You'll also be sick less often.

**Appearance.** Your breath will be fresher. Your teeth will not be as stained. You'll smell better.

**Money.** It's not only the money you save from not buying cigarettes (figure it out, the number of packs/day times 365 days a year). You'll also save on insurance premiums and medical expenses.



**Longevity.** You can live as many as 8.5 years longer to enjoy your grandchildren.

**Sexuality.** Quitting smoking decreases the risk of impotence.

**Fire safety.** You'll reduce your risk of starting a house fire. More people die from fires started by smoking materials than any other type of fire.

**Other's health.** Your loved ones will breathe easier. You'll also be a good example as a nonsmoker.

- **At 20 minutes after quitting,** blood pressure decreases, and pulse rate drops.
- **At 8 hours,** carbon monoxide level in blood drops to normal, and oxygen level in blood increases to normal.
- **At 24 hours,** chance of a heart attack decreases.
- **At 48 hours,** nerve endings start regrowing and ability to smell and taste is enhanced.
- **At 2 weeks to 3 months,** circulation improves, walking becomes easier, and lung function increases.
- **At 1 to 9 months,** coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, and shortness of breath decreases.
- **At 1 year,** excess risk of coronary heart disease is decreased to half that of a smoker.
- **At 5 to 15 years** after quitting, stroke risk is reduced to that of people who have never smoked.
- **At 10 years,** risk of lung cancer drops to as little as one-half that of continuing smokers, risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney, and pancreas decreases, and risk of ulcer decreases.
- **At 15 years,** risk of coronary heart disease and risk of death returns to nearly the level of people who have never smoked.

## Steps to Successful Quitting

Most smokers (about 70%) want to quit, and half of these try each year. Nearly 50 million Americans have stopped smoking. If they did it, you can too!

**Write down why you want to quit** (e.g., health concerns, family, improved fitness). Review these reasons daily when first quitting.

**Get help and support from your doctor.** Most people who have stopped tried several times before being successful. If you didn't make it on your last try, don't get discouraged. This time may be your successful attempt. New treatments and medications are available that can more than double your chances of quitting successfully.

**Set a quit date.** This should be within 2 weeks of the time you visit your doctor. Tell your family, friends, and coworkers your plans and your quit date, and ask for their understanding and support. Ask other smokers in your house and office not to smoke in your presence.

**Anticipate roadblocks** and plan how to handle them, such as coping with withdrawal symptoms (e.g., using nicotine replacement therapy), and fear of weight gain (e.g., replace smoking with an active lifestyle). Keep busy in the evening and on weekends with activities you enjoy.

**Prepare your environment.** Remove all tobacco products from your home and work. Avoid smoking in places where you spend a lot of time (your office, home, or car.) Have your teeth cleaned the week you stop. Keep major deadlines and pressures at a minimum the first 2 weeks after you quit.

**Make a "survival kit,"** including chewing gum, tooth picks to hold in your mouth, carrot sticks and celery, and mints or red-hot candies. Keep your fingers busy with a pencil, rubber band, or a rubber squeeze ball.

**On your quit date, STOP!** It's best to quit cold turkey, not even one puff after the quit date. Should you slip and smoke a cigarette, don't give up. Make tomorrow a smoke-free day.

**Avoid alcohol,** since alcohol reduces your resolve to quit. If you want to smoke every time you have a cup of coffee, you may want to try another hot drink.

**Get social support.** Join a stop smoking class or group. Find someone you can call and talk to when smoking urges get really strong.

**Start a list of personal benefits** you receive from stopping (e.g., feel better about yourself, less winded when exercising). Add to the list whenever you can.

**Reward your progress.** Set short- and long-term goals and rewards.

For example, if you stop for a week, buy a new outfit or CD. When you've remained stopped for 6 months, take a special vacation.

**Follow up with your doctor.** Visit your doctor during your first week of stopping, and then again a month after stopping. Discuss any difficulties you are having.

**Plan for long-term success.** Replace smoking with other activities. Many people go back to smoking if they are discouraged, so plan what you would do if you have a crisis in your life. Continue your commitment to a healthier you.



Need more help? [Smokefree.gov](http://Smokefree.gov) provides free, accurate, evidence-based information and professional assistance to help support the immediate and long-term needs of people trying to quit smoking.

Sources: American Lung Association, Environmental Protection Agency, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Heart Association, American Cancer Society. *American Journal of Public Health*. 2002;92:990-996.





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**Secondhand**  
**Smoke. If You**  
**Smoke, Quit.**

**Instructions**

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Record your smoking/nonsmoking each day. If you smoke one day, start being smoke-free again the next day. Mark each day you avoid secondhand smoke.
3. At the end of the month, total the number of days you were smoke-free. You must meet this goal at least 22 days during the month to complete the Challenge. If you are already smoke-free, write down the first names of the people you shared this information with.
4. Turn in your Wellness Challenge if requested, or enter your completion of this Wellness Challenge on the Health Activity Tracker report for the month, if applicable. Keep this record for evidence of completion.

MONTH:							WC = Wellness Challenge	ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary	
WC [ ] ex. min. _____	WC [ ] ex. min. _____	WC [ ] ex. min. _____	WC [ ] ex. min. _____	WC [ ] ex. min. _____	WC [ ] ex. min. _____	WC [ ] ex. min. _____		
WC [ ] ex. min. _____	WC [ ] ex. min. _____	WC [ ] ex. min. _____	WC [ ] ex. min. _____	WC [ ] ex. min. _____	WC [ ] ex. min. _____	WC [ ] ex. min. _____		
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WC [ ] ex. min. _____	WC [ ] ex. min. _____	WC [ ] ex. min. _____	WC [ ] ex. min. _____	WC [ ] ex. min. _____	WC [ ] ex. min. _____	WC [ ] ex. min. _____		

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of days I was smoke-free this month  
 First names of people I shared this information with: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Number of days this month I got 30+ minutes of physical activity such as brisk walking or biking

**Other wellness projects completed this month:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_