

HEART DISEASE & TOBACCO USE



How can smoking cigarettes harm my heart?

There is no safe level of smoking for your heart health. Smoking even just one cigarette per day significantly increases your risk for a number of heart problems, often referred to as cardiovascular diseases. These problems include:

- Coronary heart disease
- Stroke
- Heart attack
- Aortic aneurysm
- Sudden death (different than a heart attack)
- Peripheral arterial disease (PAD)

It's estimated that more than 150,000 people die in the United States each year due to smoking-related cardiovascular disease. Cigarettes may not be the only tobacco product that can harm your heart. Some studies have found that smokeless tobacco use may increase your risk of having a fatal heart attack or stroke.

Can smoke from my cigarette harm the heart health of people around me?

- Absolutely. Secondhand smoke causes nearly 34,000 heart disease deaths in the United States each year.
- Smoke from your cigarette can cause not only health problems for people around you, but for unborn babies and pets as well.

How will my heart benefit if I quit smoking?

If you quit smoking, you'll lower your risk for:

- A stroke
- A heart attack
- An aneurysm
- Sudden death
- PAD

You'll also decrease the risk of heart attack and stroke for people around you because you'll no longer be exposing them to secondhand smoke.

I want to quit using tobacco—how do I get started?

- Talk to your VA health care provider about cessation medications and counseling to treat your tobacco use.
- Call VA's tobacco quitline at **1-855-QUIT-VET** (1-855-784-8838) Monday–Friday. Available in English & Spanish.
- Sign up for VA's SmokefreeVET text messaging program—text the word **VET** to **47848** (manda **VETesp** al **47848** para ayuda en español) or visit [smokefree.gov/VET](https://www.smokefree.gov/VET).



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Visit [mentalhealth.va.gov/quit-tobacco](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/quit-tobacco)