

# Mayo Clinic Minute: Why tobacco users should call it quits

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Tobacco users have an increased risk of becoming very sick if they contract the virus that causes COVID-19. If you use tobacco and want to

stop, consider World No Tobacco Day on Sunday, May 31 as a start date.

"During this time when the COVID-19 pandemic has made maintaining the health of ourselves and our families top of mind, is the best time to seriously attempt to quit smoking," says Dr. J. Taylor Hays, director of Mayo Clinic's Nicotine Dependence Center. "Quitting [tobacco use](#) is the best thing you can do to improve your health now and add years of life to your future. It's never too late to quit."

To younger smokers, those younger than 40-years-old, Dr. Hays asks, "Do you want to add 10 years to your life?"

He says, if the answer is yes, [quit smoking](#).

"Do you want to avoid all of the ill health effects—[chronic lung disease](#), heart disease, lung cancer?" he asks. "Stop smoking."

Dr. Hays says those diseases are intimately associated with smoking, and, if people stop at a young age, they'll avoid virtually all of them.

"And they'll add years—not just length of life, but quality of life," says Dr. Hays.

As for older smokers, Dr. Hays says it's never too late to stop.

"Make an attempt," he says. "You still can avoid a lot of the ill health effects of smoking, stopping whenever. So if you've tried and failed, try again. It's never too late to quit."

Dr. Hays says the best way to quit is to make a plan and stick to it.

"And that plan should include some counseling and [behavioral therapy](#),

and medications that will reduce withdrawal and help maintain abstinence," says Dr. Hays.

**More information:** Check the CDC website for additional updates on COVID-19. For more information and all your COVID-19 coverage, go to the Mayo Clinic News Network and [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org).

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