

Get ready for the Great American Smokeout

19 November 2014



American Cancer Society has plenty of tips to help you kick the habit.

(HealthDay)—The third Thursday of November is almost here, and that's a key annual date for many health advocates—the Great American Smokeout.

There's no single correct way to [quit](#). But there are some important steps that can help smokers break the habit and live longer and healthier lives, according to an advice list from the American Cancer Society.

First, set a quit date. Choose a date that gives you enough time to prepare and create a plan, but not enough time to change your mind. Tell your family and friends the date so they can support you—and hold you accountable.

Make a plan. You may want to quit cold turkey or try to smoke fewer cigarettes as your "quit day" approaches, to reduce [withdrawal symptoms](#). Decide whether you're going to use nicotine-replacement products or other medicines, join a stop-smoking class, attend Nicotine Anonymous meetings, use self-help materials such as books and pamphlets, or use some combination of these methods.

Once you have a plan, start making small changes like getting rid of ashtrays in your home and car; stocking up on things like sugarless gum, hard candy or carrot sticks to keep your mouth busy; and practicing saying "No thank you, I don't smoke," when offered a cigarette.

Be sure to create a support system with a group or a family member or friend who successfully quit and can help you through your struggle to quit.

Don't smoke on your quit day. Keep yourself occupied by exercising or doing a hobby you enjoy. Avoid situations where you'll have a strong desire to smoke. This may require you to make changes to your daily routines.

Don't succumb to rationalizations such as "I'll have just one cigarette to get me through this situation" or "Everyone dies of something" or "How bad is smoking, really?" Write these thoughts down as they come to you and understand that they can trick you into returning to smoking. Be prepared by having distractions to redirect your thoughts elsewhere.

Don't get discouraged if you slip up. Few people are able to quit for good on the first try. Use what you learn from a slip up to improve your chances of success next time you try to quit.

For additional help, visit the [American Cancer Society](#) or call 1-800-227-2345.

Cigarettes cause more than 127,000 deaths from lung [cancer](#) each year in the United States. While smoking among American adults has decreased from more than 42 percent in 1965 to 19 percent today, tobacco still causes at least 30 percent of all cancer deaths and 80 percent of lung cancer deaths in the United States, according to the American Cancer Society.

More information: The American Cancer Society offers a [guide to quitting smoking](#).

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APA citation: Get ready for the Great American Smokeout (2014, November 19) retrieved 20 September 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-11-ready-great-american-smokeout.html>

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