

Fact Sheet

Tobacco use is the single largest preventable cause of disease and death in the United States. The rates of tobacco use and associated negative health effects are disproportionately higher among racial and ethnic minority and other diverse groups. The FDA provides resources and has approved several products to help you quit.

Office of Minority Health and Health Equity

How is tobacco used?

People can smoke, vape, chew, or sniff tobacco. There are many types of tobacco products on the market like cigarettes, vapes and other e-cigarettes, snuff, hookah, and gels.

What causes addiction?

All tobacco products contain nicotine, a highly addictive substance that changes how the brain works. Continued use of tobacco products may lead to feeling irritable and anxious when you don't have nicotine in your system. Over time, you may become dependent on nicotine, which is when you crave nicotine and find it difficult to stop using tobacco products.



What are the health effects of smoking tobacco?

Smoking tobacco can cause many types of cancer as well as heart disease, stroke, lung disease, type 2 diabetes, and other health problems. Tobacco smoke contains many harmful chemicals such as carbon monoxide, ammonia, and lead. Inhaling tobacco smoke exposes smokers to a toxic mix of chemicals that can damage nearly every organ in the body.

Nonsmokers are also exposed to these chemicals in the air. This is known as secondhand smoke, and secondhand smoke is known to cause heart disease and lung cancer.

How are diverse populations affected?

Tobacco products are often marketed toward racial and ethnic minority communities, which tend to have a higher density of tobacco retailers. American Indians and Alaska Natives have the highest rate of commercial tobacco use. African Americans who smoke are less successful at quitting than non-Hispanic white people who smoke and are more likely to die from a smoking-related disease.

How do I quit?

If you are thinking about quitting smoking and would like some help, a quitline might be just what you need to succeed. Quitlines provide free coaching over the phone in several languages to help you quit smoking. Call **1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)**.

You can also check out FDA's resources to help you quit at: <https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/health-effects-tobacco-use/quitting-smoking-and-other-tobacco-public-health-resources>.

The FDA has approved over-the-counter and prescription medications that can help with nicotine withdrawal and cravings. Combining these medications with other strategies can improve your chances of quitting successfully.

Tobacco cessation products and clinical trials

The FDA encourages people from diverse backgrounds to participate in clinical trials. If you think a clinical trial may be right for you, talk to your health care provider. You can also search for clinical trials in your area at www.clinicaltrials.gov.

For more information on health equity, visit www.fda.gov/healthequity.