

Managing Asthma

Did You Know?

my health assessment on myCIGNA.com can help you identify your health risks and provide a personalized health profile. Then, if your assessment indicates that you might benefit from a health behavior change program, you will be sent an online invitation to sign up. To get started, log on to myCIGNA.com today.



According to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, an estimated 20 million people in the United States have asthma. And during the last two decades, the condition has become more common.

Asthma occurs when your airways react strongly to irritants. These irritants trigger symptoms such as coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath and difficulty breathing. Common asthma triggers include allergens (pollens, molds, house dust and animal dander), strong odors (such as those found in perfumes), respiratory infections, cold air, cigarette smoke, exercise and some medicines and foods.

During an asthma attack, airways narrow and fill with mucus, and breathing becomes difficult. Attacks can range from mild to life-threatening. Fortunately, with the right medications and proper management, many people with asthma lead normal, active lives.

Tips for Daily Living

The following suggestions can help you avoid common allergens and other asthma triggers:

- **Keep your windows closed at night.**
During warm months, use air-conditioning to reduce the amount of pollen, dust and mold in your home or car.

- **Stay indoors** if the humidity or pollen count is high.
- **Don't allow smoking in your home.**
Secondhand smoke can make asthma symptoms worse.
- **Use bedding made of synthetic materials** and clean and vacuum bedrooms regularly to avoid dust buildup.
- **Allow good ventilation** and use a dehumidifier to prevent mold.

Source: CIGNA HealthCare Well-Being

The Good News About Quitting

There is nothing easy about giving up cigarettes. But as hard as quitting may be, the results are well worth it. In the first year after stopping smoking, the risk of coronary heart disease drops sharply. It then gradually returns to "normal" – that is, the same risk as someone who never smoked. So no matter what your age, quitting will lessen your chances of developing heart disease.

Getting Ready to Quit

Once you decide to stop smoking, you'll need to set a target date for quitting.

Choose a time when you won't be under a lot of stress. To help you stick to your quit date, write "I will quit smoking on (fill in the date)" on a piece of paper and have someone sign it with you. Now you have a contract. Also list on your contract how you'll reward yourself for each week and month of not smoking.

Ask the person who cosigns your contract to give you special support in your efforts to quit. Plan to talk with your supporter regularly to share your progress and to ask for encouragement. If possible, quit with a relative or friend.

Surviving "Day One." On the evening before your quit day, throw away all cigarettes, matches, lighters and ashtrays. Plan some special activities for the next day to keep you busy. Your goal is to get through that first important day smoke-free – which will help you succeed each day after that.

Keep Busy. Get involved in projects that require you to use your hands and be as physically active as you can. If you're feeling tense, try deep breathing to calm yourself. Take a slow, deep breath, count to five, and release it. Repeat 10 times.

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Know What To Expect. Shortly after quitting, you may experience headaches, irritability, tiredness, constipation or trouble concentrating. While these symptoms are not pleasant, it is important to know that they are signs that your body is recovering from smoking. Most symptoms end within two to four weeks.

Two Things To Help. Nicotine chewing gum and a nicotine patch are both available, but they are not for everyone. Talk with your health professional first.

More Help. There are many free or low cost programs available to help you stop smoking. Check with local chapters of the American Lung Association®, the American Cancer Society® and other community groups with an interest in health.

Be Good To Yourself. Get plenty of rest, drink lots of fluids and eat three balanced, healthful meals each day. If you are not as cheerful or energetic as usual during the first several weeks after quitting, don't feel guilty. You are making a major change in your life, and for that you deserve a lot of credit.

If You "Slip." If you have a small setback and smoke a cigarette after your quit date, don't worry. Most smokers "slip" before they quit for good. But to get right back on the nonsmoker track, you need to learn from experience. What was the trigger that made you light up? Then, make a list of things you will do the next time you are in that situation – and other tempting situations as well. Reread your list of all the

reasons you want to quit. And don't be too hard on yourself – you're on your way.

Source: WebMD®

Did You Know?

You probably have certain situations and feelings that trigger your desire to smoke. Do you smoke while on the telephone? After having a meal or a drink? When you feel stressed? To make stopping easier, find out what your triggers are and then come up with alternate behaviors. For example, when you crave a cigarette while you talk on the phone, have a slice of apple or a stick of sugar-free gum.

The Rewards of Being Smoke Free

We know it isn't easy to quit smoking. It can take several attempts to quit before you are successful. And research shows the cost of tobacco cessation services and products is often the greatest barrier to quitting smoking. Now the CIGNA Healthy Rewards® program* can make it easier (and less expensive) for you, with two new smoking cessation discount programs. Use one, or use both in combination.

QuitNet®: Online smoking cessation program

QuitNet is based on the same approaches recommended by the U.S. Surgeon General, combining expert counseling and social support into one easy-to-use online program. You'll receive an online membership, giving you 24/7 access

to social support, reliable personalized content, professional counseling and more.

Tobacco Solutions: Nicotine replacement patch program

Studies show that pharmaceutical support is fundamental to success. The cornerstone of this program is the Novartis Habitrol Take Control Support Program®.

You will receive:

- An eight-week supply of the Novartis Habitrol® Nicotine Transdermal System (patches) featuring the gradual step-down method of dealing with nicotine withdrawal. The 56 nicotine patches cover eight weeks of step-down therapy for people who smoke at least 10 cigarettes per day.

- A comprehensive educational booklet that contains information to guide you through the quitting process as well as instructions for proper use of the patch.
- A compact disc providing you more information about the patch and the six states of change that you will go through to successful quitting.
- A toll-free telephone support center, staffed by health professionals.
- A comprehensive and confidential Web site for additional support and information.

Let Healthy Rewards help you save money and quit smoking for good. For more information, visit www.myCIGNA.com.

* Healthy Rewards® is a discount program. Some Healthy Rewards programs are not available in all states. If your CIGNA HealthCare plan includes coverage for any of these services, this program is in addition to, not instead of, your plan benefits. Healthy Rewards programs are separate from your medical benefits. **A discount program is NOT insurance, and the member must pay the entire discounted charge.**

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