



Tobacco Use and Asthma

Asthma is a chronic disease of the lungs. People with asthma have airways that overreact to environmental triggers, such as pollen or mold, and irritants such as cigarette smoke. Chemicals found in cigarette smoke include formaldehyde (embalming fluid), ammonia (toilet cleaner) and carbon monoxide (car exhaust fumes). Exposure to these irritants can cause an asthma attack or episode, which tightens the airways and leads to wheezing, coughing and difficulty breathing.

Impact of Tobacco on Asthma

- Tobacco smoke can trigger asthma attacks and can increase asthmatic symptoms.
- Exposure to tobacco smoke in a closed environment (home, work, vehicle) increases the risk of developing asthma.

Smokers vs. Nonsmokers

- Smokers have more severe asthma attacks.
- The asthma death rate among smokers is double that of nonsmokers.
- There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke, breathing even small amounts of secondhand smoke can be dangerous.

Effects on Children

- Children with mothers who smoke during pregnancy are at a higher risk for developing asthma.
- Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at risk for developing asthma.
- Children with asthma who are exposed to secondhand smoke experience more frequent and more severe attacks.
- More than 40% of children who go to the emergency room for asthma live with smokers.
- A severe asthma attack can put a child's life in danger.



“ Take the first step to improve your health and quit smoking. ”

— Pulmonologist Farah Madhani-Lovely, MD Alaska Native Medical Center

Tips to Help You Quit

Why Should I Quit?

- 71% of adults in Alaska would like to quit tobacco.
- 93% of Alaska Native adults agree that every cigarette causes a smoker damage.
- The risk for heart disease is cut in half one year after quitting tobacco.
- In five years after quitting tobacco your risk for cancer of the mouth, throat and esophagus are cut in half.
- In ten years after quitting, your risk for developing lung cancer drops by 50%.

How Do I Quit?

- Call Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line! The Quit Line is **FREE** for all Alaskans and is available by calling 1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669) seven days a week, from 4 a.m. to 11 p.m. Quit Line services include phone counseling sessions and up to eight weeks of free nicotine replacement therapy, including the patch, gum or lozenge.
- Obtain support from friends and family. Ask Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line to send you the "Ally Guide."
- Contact your clinic to find out what tobacco resources are available in your area.
- Keep trying to quit! Most tobacco users make several quit attempts before staying quit for good.

// *I'm really glad this program exists. Getting a call once in awhile really helped me! I didn't want to say I failed, so it really helped keeping me quit. I am a non-smoker now!* **//**

— Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line Caller

