

## Is Quitting Smoking on Your Calendar for 2015?

(From the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Every January 1, people all over the world make New Year's resolutions. If you're one of the nearly 7 out of 10 current U.S. smokers who want to quit, why not get started today? Smoking is still the number one cause of preventable death and disease in the United States. Quitting now can cut your risk for diseases caused by smoking and leave you feeling stronger and healthier.



**Develop a Quit Plan** - Planning ahead is a major part of successfully quitting smoking. [Smokefree.gov](http://Smokefree.gov) offers details on how to create an [effective quit plan](#), including:

- Picking a quit date. Starting the New Year smoke free is a great idea.
- Letting loved ones know you're quitting so they can support you.
- Listing your reasons to quit smoking. See the "[Smoking and Diabetes](#)" ad featuring Bill—another former smoker who participated in the *Tips* campaign—for advice on finding your reasons to quit.
- Identifying triggers that make you want to smoke so you can avoid them, especially during the early days.
- Having places you can turn to for immediate help, including the free resources listed below.

**Use Free, Effective Resources** - There are many free resources for people trying to quit smoking:

- [1-800-QUIT-NOW](#) (1-800-784-8669) or 1-855-DÉJELO-YA (1-855-335-3569) (for Spanish speakers). This free quitline offers a lot of resources, including free quit coaching, a free quit plan, free educational materials, and referrals to other resources where you live. [See NC Quitline.](#)
- [Smokefree TXT](#). This free 24/7 program sends encouragement, advice, and tips to help smokers quit smoking and stay quit. To get started, just text QUIT to 47848, answer a few questions, and you'll start receiving messages.
- [Online Help](#). This *Tips From Former Smokers* Web page provides additional helpful online quit resources, including links to:
- [Smokefree Women](#); [Smokefree Teen](#); [Smokefree Español](#)
- [Smokefree Apps](#), The free QuitSTART app, developed with teens in mind, can help track cravings and moods, monitor progress, and identify smoking triggers.
- If you have health insurance, check with your Health Plan for quit help. Most provide some coverage.
- If you are a **Mecklenburg County employee** who subscribes to CIGNA, go to [myCigna.com](http://myCigna.com) to sign up for the Lifestyle Management Program. All FDA-approved medications for quitting are covered along with phone support.



**Find a Medication That Is Right for You** - Because cigarettes contain nicotine, a powerfully addicting chemical, your body may feel uncomfortable until it adjusts. This is known as withdrawal, and there are medications that can help lessen this feeling and the urge to smoke. Studies show that smokers who use medicine to help control cravings, along with coaching from a quitline, in a group, or from a counselor, are much more likely to succeed than those who go it alone. Talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or other health care provider before using any medications if you:

- Are pregnant or nursing

- Have a serious medical condition
- Are currently using other medications
- Are younger than 18 years of age

Many options are available if you are considering using [medications](#) to help you quit smoking. The most common quit smoking medications are nicotine replacement therapies (NRTs), which give your body a little of the nicotine that it craves without the harmful chemicals found in burning cigarettes. Examples of Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved NRTs that you can buy over the counter include:

- Nicotine patches
- Nicotine gum
- Nicotine lozenges

NRTs that require a prescription include nicotine inhalers and nasal spray; your doctor can also prescribe medication that does not contain nicotine (such as bupropion or varenicline) to help you quit smoking completely.

As the start of a New Year approaches, isn't now the perfect time to quit smoking? You can start 2015 as a healthier you by developing a quit plan, using free resources, and finding a smoking medication that is right for you. Even if you don't smoke yourself, you can use this article to help a friend or family member become smoke free in 2015! To learn more about tobacco prevention in Mecklenburg County, visit [Tobacco Free Mecklenburg](#) webpage or call 980-314-9064.

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