

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.



“ When you have asthma, quitting smoking is the number one thing you can do to protect your lungs. **”**

— Marge Stoneking, Alaska Director, American Lung Association

Tips to Help You Quit

Why Should I Quit?

- When the airways in your lungs are irritated by tobacco smoke, your asthma medication doesn't work as well. You may end up spending more money on medication and still not control your asthma symptoms.
- When you have asthma and you smoke, you are more likely to get sick from colds and other illnesses like bronchitis and pneumonia.

How Do I Quit?

- Call Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line! The quit line is FREE for all Alaskans. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Quit line services include phone coaching sessions and free nicotine replacement therapy.
- Get support from friends and family. Ask Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line to send you the Ally Guide.
- Contact your healthcare provider to find the help you need to quit.
- 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 nonsmoker now! **”**

— Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line Caller

ALASKA'S
TOBACCO
QUIT LINE
1-800-QUIT-NOW
IT'S FREE. IT'S CONFIDENTIAL. AND IT WORKS.

For more information, visit alaskaquitline.com

