



*Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama  
cares about your health and wellness.*

*This is an informational series  
designed to provide you with specific ideas  
for a healthy and safe lifestyle.*

[AlabamaBlue.com/myBlueWellness](http://AlabamaBlue.com/myBlueWellness)



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## Smoking: Quit for Life

According to the American Cancer Society, over 50 million Americans have made the decision sometime in their lives to quit smoking. Tobacco cessation is the most important step that smokers can take to enhance the length and quality of their lives.



*myBlueWellness*

*A wellness program for you  
from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama*



## Key elements to quit smoking successfully:

1. Decide to quit.
2. Set a quit date and choose a plan to quit.
3. Cope with withdrawal.
4. Quit.
5. Stay "quit."

## On the quit date:

- Do not smoke.
- Throw away all cigarettes, lighters, etc.
- Stay active through exercise and hobbies.
- Drink lots of fluids and avoid alcohol.
- If you choose, start using nicotine replacements.
- Attend a "stop smoking" class or follow a self-help plan.
- Avoid situations where the urge to smoke is strong.

## To cope with withdrawal, use the four "A's":

- **Avoid** people and places where you may be tempted to smoke.
- **Alter drinking habits.** Drink water or juices instead of alcohol or coffee. Take a walk instead of a coffee break.
- **Try Alternatives** such as gum, hard candy or raw vegetables.
- **Try Activities** like exercise or hobbies that keep your hands busy.



Smoking has been linked to many health conditions.

## Benefits after quitting:

- After 20 minutes: blood pressure drops and temperature of hands and feet increases to normal.
- After 12 hours: carbon monoxide level in the blood drops to normal.
- After 2 weeks: circulation improves; lung function increases.
- After 10 years: the risk of lung cancer death, as compared to a smoker who didn't quit, is reduced by 50%; risk of other smoke-related cancers decreases.
- After 15 years: risk of coronary heart disease is that of a non-smoker's.