

Tobacco use and your health

Using tobacco affects nearly all parts of your body by sending harmful chemicals into your blood. These chemicals damage blood vessels and lower oxygen levels. Over time, tobacco use raises the risk of serious health problems and can make kidney disease worse.

Types of tobacco

Tobacco use includes any product with tobacco or nicotine, not just cigarettes. This includes cigars, pipes, smokeless tobacco, and e-cigarettes or vapes, all of which can harm the heart, lungs, kidneys, and your overall health.

Tobacco and your kidneys

Using tobacco causes damage to blood vessels, including those that carry blood to your kidneys. When this blood flow is reduced, your kidneys cannot work as well. For people with kidney disease, tobacco use can:

- Speed up kidney damage
- Make kidney disease worse
- Increase the chance of kidney failure

Tobacco and your heart

Tobacco use causes your heart to work harder because it raises your blood pressure and narrows your blood vessels. Over time, this increases your risk for heart attack and stroke.

The connection between tobacco and diabetes

Tobacco use can raise blood sugar levels and make it harder for your body to use insulin properly. This can increase the risk of developing type 2 diabetes and make diabetes harder to manage if you already have it. People with diabetes who use tobacco also have a higher risk of complications, including heart and kidney disease.

Support for quitting tobacco

Quitting tobacco is one of the best steps to protect your body. Quitting can be hard, but even small steps can lead to big health benefits. Support makes quitting easier, and it is never too late to stop using tobacco.

Support to help quit includes:

- Talking with your doctor or care team
- Using nicotine replacement products, like patches or gum, or prescription medicines
- Finding counseling or support groups
- Using free quit lines and online programs

We are here to help

Your care team can help answer your questions about tobacco use and provide resources to help you quit. Reach out for any support you need.