

# YOUR PATH TO QUITTING A GUIDE TO TOBACCO FREEDOM



**NORTH MISSISSIPPI  
HEALTH SERVICES**

**SUPPORT, TOOLS & ENCOURAGEMENT  
FOR EVERY STEP OF YOUR JOURNEY**

## INTRODUCTION:

# GUIDED BY YOU

Quitting tobacco is one of the most important steps you can take for your health, and you don't have to take that step alone. At North Mississippi Health Services, everything we do is guided by you – your goals, your future and the life you want to build.

We meet you where you are with care that listens and support that feels personal. Whether you're thinking about quitting, ready to try again or looking for tools that make the process easier, we're here to walk beside you. Our communities are stronger when you're healthy, and your journey toward tobacco freedom matters to all of us.

## WHY QUITTING MATTERS

Quitting tobacco use benefits every part of your body – your heart, lungs, blood vessels, bones and even your skin. Giving up nicotine reduces inflammation, lowers your risk of heart disease and improves your body's ability to heal. It also protects your family and community by reducing exposure to secondhand smoke.

Whether you've smoked for one year or decades, quitting now improves your chances for a longer, healthier life. The body begins to repair itself quickly. Your heart rate slows. Your blood pressure lowers. Your oxygen levels improve. And within weeks, your blood flow becomes stronger and more effective, helping your body heal more easily.

This toolkit will help you understand how nicotine affects your body and give you the steps and support you need to stop for good. These tips include all forms of tobacco use – pipes, cigars, vapes, chewing tobacco, etc.

## UNDERSTANDING NICOTINE ADDICTION

Nicotine is a powerful chemical that affects your body and brain. It speeds up your heart rate, raises your blood pressure and creates a strong sense of dependence. When you use tobacco regularly, your body becomes used to having nicotine in its system. That's why quitting can feel challenging – your body must adjust to life without it.

Nicotine doesn't just affect your lungs. It travels through your bloodstream and impacts nearly every organ. Because it narrows blood vessels, the body must work harder to deliver oxygen and nutrients. Over time, this creates stress on your heart, slows healing and increases your risk of infection.

Understanding addiction helps you understand yourself. Wanting to quit means you're ready for a healthier path.

## HOW NICOTINE HURTS YOUR HEALING

After surgery or injury, your body begins healing right away – and healing depends on healthy blood flow. Tiny vessels called capillaries carry oxygen to your skin, muscles, bones and organs.

Nicotine narrows these vessels, restricting the oxygen your body needs to repair itself. This slows or even stops healing in some areas, raising your risk of infection. If you have diabetes, the damage can be even more severe, since your wounds already heal more slowly.

Smoking is linked to higher rates of wound infection, tissue damage, bone healing problems and complications after many types of surgery. Quitting at least six weeks before surgery can significantly improve your body's ability to recover.

# YOUR PERSONAL QUIT PLAN

Every person's journey to quitting looks different. A personalized plan gives you structure and support.

## 1. Know Your Reasons

Write down why quitting matters to you. Better health, more energy, saving money, protecting loved ones – your “why” is your anchor.

Take a moment on this page to write your “why.” Be detailed so you can return to this as needed for motivation and inspiration.

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## 2. Set a Quit Date

Choose a day within the next two weeks.  
Mark it on your calendar.  
Treat it like an appointment  
with your future self.

<p><i>My quit date:</i></p> <hr/>
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## 3. Understand Your Triggers

Stress, boredom, certain social situations or daily routines may make you want to smoke. Identifying triggers helps you plan healthier alternatives.

### Triggers

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### Healthy Alternatives

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What might some of your triggers be? Go ahead and think of a plan of action that you can take to help you avoid or respond to some of these triggers. Having a plan in place BEFORE you encounter your triggers will help you feel empowered and confident.



# MANAGING WITHDRAWAL & CRAVINGS

Withdrawal is temporary. Your body is adjusting to life without nicotine, and every day you get stronger.

## What You May Feel

- Irritability
- Trouble sleeping
- Cravings
- Restlessness
- Mood changes

## What Helps

- Deep breathing
- Drinking water
- Light exercise
- Healthy snacks
- Changing your routine
- Reaching out to a support person

Give yourself patience and compassion during this time. You're unlearning a habit built over years, and every craving resisted is a win.

# WHAT TO DO IF YOU SLIP

A slip isn't a failure – it's a moment. What matters is what you do next.

Instead of judging yourself, pause and think about what led to the slip. Were you stressed? Tired? Around others who were smoking? Use that insight to strengthen your plan.

You can always start again. Resilience is part of the NMHS spirit – determined, forward looking and committed to better tomorrows.

# RESOURCES & SUPPORT

You're never alone in this journey. Support is available in many forms:

## NMHS Services

Your care team can help you find the right tools, programs or medications.

## Quitlines

**1-800-QUIT-NOW** offers free coaching in multiple languages.

## Apps & Online Tools

- [Smokefree.gov](http://Smokefree.gov)
- American Lung Association – [lung.org](http://lung.org)

# YOU ARE OUR TRUE NORTH

Your journey toward tobacco freedom is a powerful step toward a healthier future. Every choice you make today shapes the life you want tomorrow. And throughout that journey, we're here to guide, support and encourage you – because your health, your goals and your future are our True North.

**You're not just quitting a habit. You're choosing a better tomorrow.**

# 100 DAY TRACKER

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7	DAY 8	DAY 9	DAY 10
DAY 11	DAY 12	DAY 13	DAY 14	DAY 15	DAY 16	DAY 17	DAY 18	DAY 19	DAY 20
DAY 21	DAY 22	DAY 23	DAY 24	DAY 25	DAY 26	DAY 27	DAY 28	DAY 29	DAY 30
DAY 31	DAY 32	DAY 33	DAY 34	DAY 35	DAY 36	DAY 37	DAY 38	DAY 39	DAY 40
DAY 41	DAY 42	DAY 43	DAY 44	DAY 45	DAY 46	DAY 47	DAY 48	DAY 49	DAY 50
DAY 51	DAY 52	DAY 53	DAY 54	DAY 55	DAY 56	DAY 57	DAY 58	DAY 59	DAY 60
DAY 61	DAY 62	DAY 63	DAY 64	DAY 65	DAY 66	DAY 67	DAY 68	DAY 69	DAY 70
DAY 71	DAY 72	DAY 73	DAY 74	DAY 75	DAY 76	DAY 77	DAY 78	DAY 79	DAY 80
DAY 81	DAY 82	DAY 83	DAY 84	DAY 85	DAY 86	DAY 87	DAY 88	DAY 89	DAY 90
DAY 91	DAY 92	DAY 93	DAY 94	DAY 95	DAY 96	DAY 97	DAY 98	DAY 99	<b>DAY 100!</b> <i>You made it to 100 days! Find a way to celebrate your success!</i>