

Smoking and Diabetes - A BAD Combination

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Diabetes is a serious chronic illness that needs to be carefully controlled throughout your lifetime. With diabetes, the body does not produce enough insulin (a hormone) to process sugar (glucose) from foods. The sugar stays in the bloodstream and can lead to certain complications affecting the eyes, kidneys, nerves, and heart. Managing your diabetes means checking your blood sugar, controlling your diet and weight, and seeing your physician regularly for the appropriate screening tests.

Nicotine, found in tobacco, is physically and psychologically addictive. Smoking causes cancer and damage to your blood vessels. The combination of smoking and diabetes results in a serious risk of even more damage to your health. With diabetes, smoking increases the risk of life-threatening complications.

Smoking will:

- ✓ Increase blood glucose (sugar) levels, making it harder to manage your diabetes.
- ✓ Increase blood pressure, which increases the risk of heart attack or stroke.
- ✓ Damage and cause narrowing of your blood vessels. This can lead to blood vessel disease and leg and foot infections.
- ✓ Increase risk of dying from cardiovascular diseases.
- ✓ Increase risk of developing nerve damage.
- ✓ Increase risk of developing kidney disease.
- ✓ Increase risk of developing gum disease (periodontitis).

Tips for Quitting:

- ✓ Decide to quit. Make this a turning point in your life, one that will help you to better manage your health, especially your diabetes.
- ✓ Before quitting, develop a plan. Some people can quit all at once (“cold-turkey”) but others find it easier and more successful to develop a gradual timeline.
- ✓ Begin to substitute other behaviors or replacements for smoking.
- ✓ Keep a diary of times and places where you smoke most often and find alternative places to go or things to do at those times.
- ✓ Ask friends and family for support.
- ✓ Reward yourself by saving your cigarette money to buy yourself little gifts or go on a weekend trip.
- ✓ Exercise.
- ✓ Try relaxation techniques – deep breathing and meditation can help to reduce stress and provide a feeling of well-being.

There are many programs available to help you quit. Talk to your doctor about your decision to stop smoking. Your doctor will help you to choose the best plan or program for you.

Participate in the Great American Smokeout - 3rd Sunday in November!

Sources:

American Diabetes Association

www.diabeted.org

American Lung Association

www.lungusa.org