It’s time to kick some butts!

When it comes to smoking, be a quitter

Quitting smoking is the most important thing smokers can do to live a longer, healthier life. Yet almost one in every five American adults smoke.2

You’re not weak, you’re addicted

If you’ve tried to stop smoking and always seem to pick it up again, you’re not alone. Nicotine, the drug in tobacco, is as addictive as heroin or cocaine. When you breathe in cigarette smoke, the inhaled nicotine reaches your brain even faster than drugs taken through a needle. Smoking, and the chemicals in tobacco products, affect the heart and blood vessels, your hormones, your respiratory system, your metabolism and your brain. And if you are a woman who is pregnant, nicotine affects your baby in the same ways.

A smoker who tries to quit faces up to a few weeks of withdrawal. The physical addiction to nicotine is in full force after just a few weeks of smoking. But also, there is a mental addiction to the habit of smoking. Both types of addiction have to be tackled when someone quits smoking.

Making it through the cravings

Between the withdrawal symptoms and the challenge of breaking a habit, it’s no wonder many smokers have a hard time quitting. Here are some ways to cope:3, 4

- **Take a brisk walk.** Even a five- or 10-minute walk can help you through your craving and withdrawal symptoms. It can also triple the amount of time it takes for your next craving to hit.

- **Spend time in places where you can’t smoke.** Try the library, museums, bookstores and malls.

- **Change other habits too.** If you used to smoke when you watched TV, unplug the TV set. If you had to smoke with your morning coffee, have tea instead. Make plans to do something you enjoy when you would have smoked your favorite cigarettes of the day — take a walk outdoors, call a friend, take a bath or play a game. If you change your routine, you are less likely to feel something is missing.

The symptoms of nicotine withdrawal include:1

- Dizziness (for the first day or two)
- Depression
- Feeling frustrated or angry
- Trouble focusing
- Feeling really tired
- Headache
- Trouble sleeping and bad dreams
- Nausea or hunger
- Anxiety and irritability

Call 800-QUIT-NOW for help.

Sources
1 American Cancer Society website: Guide to Quitting Smoking (accessed March 2015): cancer.org

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○ List your reasons. Make a list of all your reasons for quitting. Keep copies of it in your wallet, at your desk, and on the refrigerator. Look at it when you are tempted to smoke.

○ Don’t be fooled. Remember, there is no such thing as “just one” cigarette or puff. The strong desire to smoke will eventually pass.

○ Stall. If you feel like you are about to give in, tell yourself you have to wait at least 10 minutes. This will often be enough time for you to get past the craving.

○ Reward yourself. Save the money you would have spent on tobacco for a daily treat or a major purchase.

Timeline for withdrawal
Quitting smoking is hard, but worth it! Withdrawal symptoms usually show up within a few hours of the last cigarette. They are at their worst on the second or third day, then they gradually go away over the next couple of weeks. But while you’re cranky, tired and depressed, good things are happening to your body.

○ Within minutes: Your blood pressure drops.

○ Within 12 hours: The level of carbon monoxide in your blood returns to normal.

○ Within a week: Most of the nicotine has left your body.

○ Within three months: Your circulation and breathing improve.

○ One to nine months after quitting: Coughing and shortness of breath decrease; your lungs regain the ability to clean themselves, reducing your risk of infection.

○ One year after quitting: Your risk of heart disease goes down.

○ Five years after quitting: Your risk of stroke goes down.

○ Ten years after quitting: Your risk of getting cancer of the lung, mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, cervix and pancreas goes down.

○ Fifteen years after quitting: You have no more risk of heart disease than if you had never smoked.

Visit anthem.com for more ways to get healthy — and stay healthy.
Most people know that good health is built one choice at a time. And, it’s a lifelong journey. If you don’t want to go it alone and need a little help to stay on track, Health Assistant is the perfect tool for you.

Health Assistant is your very own virtual advisor. When you sign up, you can fill out a detailed questionnaire about your health and Health Assistant will suggest health goals for you based on your health status. Or, you can go directly to the list of goals without filling out the questionnaire. Health Assistant will help you make positive changes in these areas:

- Weight loss
- Nutrition
- Exercise
- Quitting smoking or tobacco use
- Stress management
- Emotional health

Then you choose activities and weekly targets to help you, step-by-step, meet your overall goal. Your Health Assistant tracks your progress and gives you encouragement along the way. Plus, your Health Assistant gives you a wealth of helpful information to guide your success week after week.

As your health evolves, you can change your goals and activities with just a click. And, your Health Assistant will be there every step of the way with a fun, interactive, online experience that caters to your needs and motivates you to strive for your best health.

“Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out…”
– Robert J. Collier

Meet your Health Assistant today!

1. Log in to anthem.com.
2. Register (if you haven’t yet).
3. Click Health & Wellness.
4. Click Wellness Tool Kit.