

# Quitting Smoking Reduces Risk of Serious Illness



DeKalb Medical

*This is the seventh article in a series focusing on cardiovascular disease presented by DeKalb Medical.*

Did you know that cigarette smoking is the most preventable source of illness, disease and premature death in the United States? According to the American Lung Association, smoking-related diseases claim the lives of 438,000 Americans each year. This figure includes smokers, as well as babies born prematurely due to prenatal maternal smoking and those affected by the smoke exhaled by smokers, also known as secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke is especially harmful to children.

One in three smokers dies early because of their smoking. Diseases caused by smoking include heart disease, stroke, many types of cancer and a variety of chronic lung diseases. According to American Lung Association statistics, smoking is directly responsible for 90 percent of lung cancer deaths and approximately 80-90 percent of emphysema and chronic bronchitis deaths. About 8.6 million people in the U.S. have at least one serious illness caused by smoking.

Cigarette smoke contains over 4,800 chemicals, 69 of which are known causes of cancer. Nicotine is a highly addictive drug found in cigarettes. Smokers not only become physically addicted to nicotine but also link smoking with many social occasions, which makes it an even harder habit to break.

The good news is that quitting smoking greatly decreases your risk of these deadly diseases. Former smokers report that they are glad to be rid of cigarette stains on their fingers and teeth, chronic coughs and the lingering smell of smoke on their clothes. They also report an increased sense of taste and smell. Stopping smoking early is extremely

beneficial, but quitting at any time provides meaningful life extensions.

The trend in America is for public places to go smoke-free. Workplaces nationwide are restricting smoking areas or going smoke-free to provide employees with an environment free of the life-threatening effects of secondhand smoke.

So, how do you quit? There are many resources available to those who would like to quit smoking. Programs such as the Freedom From Smoking® program offered by the American Lung Association can offer many ideas on how to quit smoking. Individual, group and telephone counseling can be helpful in your efforts to stop smoking. DeKalb Medical offers Nicotine Anonymous meetings, which provide a 12-step approach to quitting smoking. For more information on these meetings, call 404.501.WELL (9355).

There are also various medications that can be used to help you kick the nicotine habit. Nicotine replacement products, such as gum and patches, slowly wean smokers from their addiction. Many of these products are available over the counter while others require a prescription. If you're ready to quit, ask your doctor about the options available to you.

#### **Here are some other useful tips:**

- Choose a good time to quit (not around a holiday or when you are under a lot of stress)
- Exercise regularly
- Get plenty of sleep
- Eat a balanced diet
- Drink a lot of water
- Ask family, friends and co-workers for their support

Quitting smoking may seem like an impossible task,



**Ask The Doctor**  
Steven Storey, M.D.

but it can be done. It may take a few tries but if you stick with it, you can succeed. Talk with your doctor, join a support group and solicit help from your family and friends. The benefits will certainly be worth your efforts!

**Source: American Lung Association**

## Less-Guilt Chocolate Chip Cookies

*These tasty treats are lower in fat and calories than your usual recipe but still full of flavor!*

- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 3 Tbsp. granulated sugar
- 3 Tbsp. or margarine
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 large egg
- 3 Tbsp. water
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup "white" whole-wheat flour
- 1/3 cup toasted wheat germ
- 3/4 tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 cup semisweet mini chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly spray baking sheet with nonstick spray. In medium bowl, cream sugars with



margarine. Stir in vanilla, egg and water. Sift together flours, toasted wheat germ, baking soda and salt; stir into creamed mixture. Stir in mini chocolate chips. Drop dough by heaping teaspoonfuls onto baking sheet. Bake 10-12 minutes. Allow cookies to cool for a few minutes on baking sheet before removing to cool completely on wire racks.