

SMOKING AND VAPING CAN INCREASE YOUR COVID-19 RISKS



Here are three good reasons why you should stop smoking and vaping now:

1

Smoking doubles your risk of developing respiratory infections.

In one study,¹ 391 healthy volunteers had 1 of 5 respiratory viruses, including a coronavirus, dropped in a liquid into their noses. The volunteers who smoked were twice as likely as those who did not smoke to develop an infection. Smoking is known to weaken the immune system and the body's ability to fight infections.²

2

Smoking doubles your risk of getting sicker from COVID-19.

In a review of 5 studies published to date,³ smoking is most likely associated with getting sicker with COVID-19. In the largest study of 1,099 people with COVID-19,⁴ people who smoke were 2.4 times more likely to get really sick compared to those who did not smoke. Smoking can cause chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and other health problems that may contribute to serious illness.² Stopping smoking still helps your health if you have COPD or heart disease.⁵

3

Vaping harms lung health.

Growing evidence suggests that the aerosol from vaping devices can harm lungs at the cellular and organ levels and worsen the body's ability to fight respiratory infections.⁶ The recent outbreak of e-cigarette, or vaping-associated product lung injury, predominantly affecting young people, is still a major public health concern.⁷

Doctors and health professionals are working to treat sick patients for the COVID-19 virus. The best ways for you to help are to stay home, wash your hands, and not smoke or vape.

You can get free help to stop smoking and vaping! [The Idaho QuitLine](#) is here for you. Counselors will help you develop your own personal quit plan by phone or chat. Text, and app programs are available too. It is great to work through the stress and anxiety of quitting with caring professionals during these troubling times. The counselors can also talk with you about medications like nicotine patches, gums, or lozenges that are over-the-counter and help manage cravings. You may be eligible for special offers that send free nicotine patches to your home.

Keep a smoke-free home to protect others as well. Secondhand smoke worsens lung health for nonsmokers, especially children.²

If you are a nonsmoker, contact [the Idaho QuitLine](#) to find out how to help someone you love quit smoking or vaping. Being smoke and tobacco-free is as important as washing your hands and covering your cough for your health and the health of your family and our community.



ProjectFilter.org

1-800-QUIT-NOW

FAQS

QUESTIONS

Are people who smoke at more risk of COVID-19?

While there is not enough evidence to be certain that people who smoke are more likely to get COVID-19, we know that they are at a higher risk of getting lung and chest infections in general. This means that it is more likely than not that people who smoke have a higher risk of getting COVID-19 compared to people who do not smoke.

Also, the hand-to-mouth action of smoking and e-cigarette use means that people who smoke may be more vulnerable to COVID-19, as they are touching their face and mouth more often.

Sharing any type of tobacco or smoking product (for example, cigarettes, e-cigarettes or shisha/waterpipes) can also increase the risk of spreading COVID-19.



Are people who smoke more likely to have severe complications if they do get COVID-19?

There is growing evidence to suggest that people who smoke are likely to be more severely impacted by COVID-19, because smoking damages the lungs so that they do not work as well. For example, lungs naturally produce mucus, but people who smoke have more and thicker mucus that is hard to clean out of the lungs. This mucus clogs the lungs and is prone to becoming infected. Smoking also affects the immune system, making it harder to fight infection.

There is also evidence that people with other health conditions like cardiovascular disease and cancer are more likely to experience severe complications of COVID-19. Smoking increases the risk of many of these conditions.



What if I previously smoked? Am I still at more risk of COVID-19?

It is not currently known if former smokers have a higher risk of getting COVID-19 compared to people who have never smoked. People who smoke are at increased risk of lung infections in general, but the lungs do heal relatively rapidly when people stop smoking. It is not yet known how long is long enough to reduce the risk to the same as someone who has never smoked.

If you previously smoked and are now quit, it is likely you will have a lower risk of severe complications (if you were infected with the virus) than you would have if you were still smoking.



How long do people have to stop smoking to reduce their risk of COVID-19 and possible complications?

This is not currently known for COVID-19 specifically, but it is well-established that stopping smoking improves lung health within a few months. Rates of lung infections like bronchitis and pneumonia also decrease.

Is it still safe to start, or continue to use, nicotine replacement therapy and other stop smoking medications?

For people who smoke, stop smoking medications like nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) can help to reduce cravings and manage withdrawal symptoms. When combined with tailored support from the **Idaho Quitline**, these medications give people the best chance of successfully quitting.

There is no evidence that COVID-19 has an impact on the safety and effectiveness of these medications. If you are already using these medications, it is safe to continue to do so, as instructed by your doctor. If you are thinking about starting these medications, it is best to first speak with an **Idaho Quitline** counselor or your doctor.



Where can I get the best support to stop smoking?

The best thing you can do for your health is to stop smoking. The best way to stop smoking is to use a tailored quit counseling service such as **the Idaho QuitLine**, plus stop smoking medications, such as nicotine patches, gum, and lozenges.

If you or someone you know is ready to quit using tobacco products, free help is available by visiting: **1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)** and **projectfilter.org**.

If you or someone you know uses e-cigarette products and experiences symptoms such as cough, shortness of breath, or chest pain, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea, fatigue, fever, or weight loss, seek medical care immediately.

References

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