

# Quit smoking, add years to your life

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As resolutions go, quitting smoking could be the most important choice on a smoker's list.

Smokers are more likely to develop diseases like lung, throat and mouth cancer. And they're more likely to die earlier than are people who don't light up.

Dr. J. Taylor Hays, director of the Mayo Clinic Nicotine Dependence Center, says it's never too late to quit the habit. He explains why here:

To younger smokers, those younger than 40-years-old, Dr. Hays asks, "Do you want to add 10 years to your life?"

He says, if the answer is yes, [quit smoking](#).

"Do you want to avoid all of the ill health effects—[chronic lung disease](#), [heart disease](#), lung cancer?" he asks. "Stop smoking."

Dr. Hays says those diseases are intimately associated with smoking, and, if people stop at a young age, they'll avoid virtually all of them.

"And they'll add years—not just length of life, but quality of life," says Dr. Hays.

As for older smokers, Dr. Hays says it's never too late to stop.

"Make an attempt," he says. "You still can avoid a lot of the ill health effects of smoking, stopping whenever. So if you've tried and failed, try again. It's never too late to quit."

Dr. Hays says the best way to quit is to make a plan and stick to it.

"And that plan should include some counseling and [behavioral therapy](#), and medications that will reduce withdrawal and help maintain abstinence," says Dr. Hays.

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