myHealth CONNECTIONS
PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

ignites

Wellness Wednesdays

NOVEMBER, 2025 WEEK 2

BEYOND YOUR LUNGS:

Quitting Helps More Than Just Your Lungs

When you quit smoking or vaping, you're not only giving your lungs a rest — you're also giving your mind and your skin a chance to heal.

Mental Health Benefits of Quitting

It's common to believe smoking calms nerves, but in truth, nicotine addiction keeps a cycle of tension and withdrawal going. Over time, quitting is linked with reduced anxiety, less depression, and better overall emotional balance. Observational studies show people who stop smoking often experience improvements in mood and mental health compared to those who continue with their addictions.

Research indicates that quitting smoking is as effective as antidepressants for mild to moderate depression. One large study found that people who quit smoking experienced significantly lower symptoms of anxiety and depression after sustained abstinence.

The first few days or weeks without nicotine will be challenging, let's not sugarcoat it. However, the long-term emotional rewards of ceasing smoking are well-worth the temporary withdrawal symptoms.

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Skin Health Reboot

Smoking deprives your skin of oxygen and damages collagen and elastin, speeding up sagging, wrinkles, uneven tone, and slow healing. After quitting, your skin begins to recover. Circulation improves, more nutrients reach cells, and damaged structures start to repair. You may notice:

- Brighter, more even tone
- Slower rate of new lines and fine wrinkles
- Gradual recovery of collagen and firmness
- Decrease in discoloration and "graying"
- Better wound healing
- Changes in skin pigmentation even within a month after quitting

Some effects of long-term smoking can't be fully reversed, but quitting still lowers your risk of developing further skin damage or inflammation.

CLICK OR TAP!

We've highlighted some resources you may want to look into further. Simply click or tap the icon or its hyperlink to access these select materials!

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Steps to Support Your Journey

Practices to support mental and skin health:

❶ Consult your physician.

Whenever making any big changes to your health and wellness, it's always a good idea to talk to a doctor about your goals before you begin.

❷ Build a plan.

Choose a quit date, list triggers, and plan for coping strategies (deep breathing, walking, distraction).

❸ Seek support.

Counseling, group programs, or coaching can double your chance of success.

❹ Use approved aids.

Nicotine replacement therapies (patches, gums, lozenges) or medications like bupropion can help manage cravings.

❺ Hydrate and nourish your body.

Water supports skin repair, nutrients like vitamin C and protein help regeneration.

❻ Protect your skin.

Use sunscreen, moisturize, and avoid harsh products that may irritate sensitive skin.

❼ Monitor your mood.

Practice mindfulness, gratitude journaling, or relaxation techniques when cravings and stress arise.

❽ Remember that setbacks are normal.

Quitting may take multiple attempts, but each effort gets you closer to lasting change.

Benefit Resources

You don't have to go through this alone. **ComPsych EAP** and **BCBSIL Resources** offer quit programs, counseling, stress tools, and skin health support to help you breathe easier and live better this season.

SOURCES: *JAMA Network*, *Campion et. al*, *NuiQuitin UK*, *NHS UK*

Understanding Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

As daylight hours shorten, some people experience Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), a type of depression linked to changes in light exposure. Symptoms may include persistent low mood, lethargy, changes in appetite or sleep, and slower thinking. Ways to defeat SAD:

- Spend time outdoors during daylight
- Use bright light therapy lamps (consult your provider)
- Maintain a regular sleep schedule
- Stay active and social
- Seek counseling or treatment if symptoms persist

SAD can complicate your decision to quit smoking. Pairing your quit plan with extra self-care during fall and winter is wise.

Share this article with your colleagues so they too can enjoy a smoke-free lifestyle!