SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS & TOBACCO USE

How are **substance use disorders (SUD) and smoking** related?

An adult with a substance use disorder (SUD) is 3-4 times more likely to smoke than someone who doesn't have an SUD. In fact, 50% of deaths among people with an alcohol use disorder who smoke are due to tobacco-related diseases.

What kinds of **health problems can occur when I have a SUD and I smoke?**

- You have a much greater chance of getting cancer of the mouth, throat, and esophagus when you smoke and drink alcohol
- Cravings for nicotine can increase your cravings for drugs, thereby jeopardizing your recovery
- Like anyone who smokes, you are at greater risk for serious health conditions like certain types of cancer, COPD, heart disease, and breathing issues

Can I **quit smoking while I am getting SUD treatment and how will it improve my health?**

Yes! Many people in SUD treatment want to quit smoking and have a good chance at doing so, especially with support like counseling and medication. It is not true that you can't try to quit smoking while you are in treatment or early recovery.

The health benefits of quitting smoking include:

- Reducing your risk of cancer, especially those of the mouth, throat, and esophagus if you have an alcohol use disorder
- Improving your chance of not relapsing to alcohol or drugs
- Lowering your risk of lung disease, heart disease, Alzheimer's disease, and other tobacco-related conditions

Since smoking can sometimes trigger the desire to use another substance, quitting smoking may help you in your long-term recovery.

I want to quit using **tobacco — how do I get started?**

- Call VA's tobacco quitline at **1-855-QUIT-VET** (I-855-784-8838) Monday–Friday, available in English & Spanish
- Sign up for VA's SmokefreeVET text messaging program— text the word **VET** to **47848** (or **VETesp** to **47848** for Spanish) or visit smokefree.gov/VET
- Talk to your VA primary care provider or addiction treatment provider about tobacco cessation medications and counseling that can help you quit
- Visit publichealth.va.gov/smoking