

WOMEN'S HEALTH & TOBACCO USE



How does smoking affect my health?

Smoking harms a woman's health across the lifespan. Lung cancer now causes more deaths among women than breast cancer – 80% of these deaths are due to smoking. Women benefit from stopping tobacco use at any age.

When you smoke, you increase your risk for:

- Cervical and vulvar cancers if you have human papillomavirus (HPV)
- Ovarian cancer
- Breast cancer
- Early menopause
- More severe menopause symptoms
- Pelvic inflammatory disease
- Osteoporosis
- Low bone density if you are postmenopausal
- Hip fracture
- More severe period symptoms, including irregular bleeding and cramps
- Premenstrual syndrome (PMS) and premenstrual dysphoric disorder, which is a more serious form of PMS

If you use oral contraceptives or hormone replacement therapy, you also have even higher risk for problems like heart attack and stroke.

How does my smoking affect my pregnancy?

If you are *trying to get pregnant*, you are more likely to experience:

- Problems getting pregnant

If you are *already pregnant*, you are more likely to experience:

- Miscarriage and stillbirth
- Premature delivery
- Life-threatening complications for you and your baby

How will my health improve if I quit using tobacco?

You decrease your risk for health problems such as:

- Cervical cancer
- Breast cancer
- Ovarian cancer
- Early menopause

If you're trying to get pregnant or are already pregnant, you are more likely to:

- Become pregnant
- Avoid pregnancy complications
- Have a healthy baby

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

- Talk to your VA health care provider about cessation medications and counseling to treat your tobacco use.
- Call VA's tobacco quitline at **1-855-QUIT-VET** (1-855-784-8838) Monday–Friday. Available in English & Spanish.
- Sign up for VA's SmokefreeVET text messaging program—text the word **VET** to **47848** (manda **VETesp** al **47848** para ayuda en español) or visit [smokefree.gov/VET](https://www.smokefree.gov/VET).

