

# HIV AND SMOKING

YOUR QUIT JOURNEY STARTS TODAY.



## What is HIV and how does it affect my life span?

HIV is the virus that can lead to AIDS. HIV harms the body's cells that fight infections. It is spread mostly by having unprotected sex or sharing needles with someone who has HIV. People who live with HIV or AIDS can expect to enjoy nearly-normal life spans, if they quit smoking and follow their treatment plans.

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## How many people who live with HIV are smokers?

Compared to those who don't have HIV, about two to three times as many people who do have HIV are smokers. Many people living with HIV say that smoking helps them to cope with the stress and stigma of the disease. They may be less likely to ask for advice about quitting, if they believe that providers are blaming or judging them.



Reach out today, for all the help you need to stop smoking.

Call 1-800-Quit Now (1-800-784-8669)

Connect online at [QuitNowVirginia.org](http://QuitNowVirginia.org)

Text READY to 34191

## If I am living with HIV, how does smoking affect me?

Smokers living with HIV shorten their lives by an average of 12 years. Smoking damages the cells which control HIV and fight infections such as pneumonia. HIV causes chronic inflammation in the body and smoking can make that inflammation worse. People with HIV who smoke are more likely than people with HIV who do not smoke to develop:

- Cancers of the lung, head, and neck as well as anal and cervical cancers
- COPD
- Pneumocystis pneumonia
- Heart disease and stroke
- Illnesses that lead to AIDS
- Resistance to treatments that help to manage HIV and AIDS

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## How will quitting smoking improve my health, if I am living with HIV?

Two-thirds of people living with HIV want to quit smoking. When you quit smoking, you can reduce your HIV-related symptoms and decrease the odds of getting smoking-related diseases.

When women living with HIV quit smoking, they are less likely to be infertile or have low birth weight babies.

**VDH** VIRGINIA  
DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH  
Tobacco Control Program

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