



Blue Shield offers a helpful Smoking Cessation Program

The Smoking Cessation Program is offered through Healthy Lifestyle Rewards, a powerful online intervention that provides personalized tools and resources to help you meet the challenges of quitting for life.

Get started today in the Smoking Cessation Program by registering on the Healthy Lifestyle Rewards Web site at blueshieldca.com/hlr.

Some features of the Smoking Cessation Program include:

- A smoking cessation planner to keep track of your daily cigarettes and your techniques for resisting the urge to smoke.
- A Tobacco Use resource center where you can learn more about how to be, and stay, a non-tobacco user.
- Diet management resources to help you watch your weight as you quit.

There are many compelling reasons to quit smoking today.

Cigarette smoking damages your lungs and airways by causing air passages to swell and fill with mucus. You may develop a cough that won't go away. If you keep smoking, breathing gradually becomes more difficult. Smoking also increases your risk of lung cancer, chronic lung disease, such as emphysema, and cardiovascular disease. One-third of all smokers who continue smoking will die prematurely because of smoking.

In women, smoking may affect the ability to get pregnant. Smoking during pregnancy increases the risk of miscarriage, premature delivery, and a low-birth weight baby. Also, women who smoke are more likely to have early menopause and osteoporosis.

Quitting decreases your risk of all of these health problems. In fact, 10 to 15 years after quitting, a former smoker's risk of premature death approaches that of a person who has never smoked. As soon as you stop smoking, your circulation improves, the carbon monoxide level in your blood declines, and

breathing becomes easier. Quitting smoking can't undo permanent lung damage. But, it may slow further damage to your lungs.

If you've smoked for seven years or less, irreversible lung disease is unlikely. Even if smoking has damaged your lungs, you can reverse most or all of this damage by stopping smoking now. If you're concerned about lung function, your doctor can do a simple breathing test (spirometry). This test measures the amount of air your lungs can hold and the rate of airflow into and out of your lungs.