

What You Should

Know



Lesbians, also referred to as women who partner with women (WPW) are more likely to be current and former smokers than heterosexual women. This difference is partly due to the additional stress of living in a sometimes hostile, intolerant society.

64% of African American WPW who participated in a national study reported being current or former smokers.

Similar numbers of African American same gender loving women (20.9%) and heterosexual women (21.3%) report being a current smoker.

Women who partner with women tend to smoke more than heterosexual.

Both lesbians and African Americans have been specifically targeted by the tobacco industry in advertisements.

Smoking is a major risk to health and a leading cause of lung cancer.

More women die from lung cancer than from breast cancer (ACS) in fact it is the leading cause of cancer death among women.

Smoking leads to uterine cervical, mouth and throat cancers as well as heart disease, bronchitis and emphysema.

African American women have a harder time quitting than other women but it can be done. You will see the benefits of quitting smoking no matter when you quit. Although the sooner you quit smoking the better -- it's never too late to quit!

Reclaiming Wellness:

African American women who quit live longer than women who don't quit.

Quitting cigarette smoking will lower your risk of heart disease, cancer, and stroke.

Life can be stressful.

We all have different ways we deal with that stress -- some of those ways are not healthy for us. For many, smoking is one of the ways we handle stress.



The best way to reclaim your wellness is to quit altogether but quitting can be hard. Sometimes you have to quit more than once to quit for good. Below are some tips to help you create a Personal Quit Plan. Use as many things that you think will help you quit for good.

Relaxation is a good way to deal with stressful situations without smoking. Starting at your feet, tighten the muscles as hard as you can, then relax them. Move up to your legs and do the same thing. Continue tightening and releasing your muscles all the way up your body, down your arms and out your fingertips. Practicing this type of progressive muscle relaxation is helpful at changing your focus when you have the urge to smoke.

Fast deep breathing can also take your mind off a craving. Similar to the panting women do during Lamaze, rapid deep breathing introduces additional oxygen to your body and brain.

Other relaxation techniques include: meditation, yoga, visualization, exercise, journal-

ing. These techniques help you slow down, which is so important in our fast pace lives.

Create or find a support system to help you quit. Many support groups exist for people trying to quit smoking, including groups that serve gays and lesbians exclusively. Toll free quit lines, and websites can also help give you support as you begin your new smoke free life.

Be gentle with yourself. Quitting is sometimes difficult. You may have to quit more than once. Researchers show that the more you self talk that combats the negative self talk that we all have, by using these affirmations as many times as you can every day or whenever you get the urge to smoke, they will become part of your belief system. You can say these affirmations out loud, write them down, or simply read them to yourself.

Affirm my right to a healthy body, mind, and spirit and quitting smoking is a step toward achieving that right.

Although I may stumble on my journey to being smoke free, I will pick myself up and start anew and still be one step closer to my goal.

I am a divine spirit capable of attaining any goal. I celebrate my commitment to wellness by living smoke free.

Your doctor might prescribe other therapies like Wellbutrin™ or Zyban™ if it is appropriate for you.

Quitting cigarette smoking is one of the best things you can do to honor your



It's All

Goals - Use this section to write down your personal health goals related to quitting smoking. Keep these goals and affirmations with you as part of your personal pathway to optimum health.

I am a strong, fierce, and empowered Black woman and I can break the smoking habit.

I can handle any stressor that comes my way without smoking.

I can call on the divine for strength, hope and achievements.

Even the small steps toward change are big achievements.

I am worthy of health and a life free of disease. I can take charge of my life and my health by quitting smoking.

I can take charge of my life and my health by quitting smoking.

I am a divine spirit capable of attaining any goal.

Although I may stumble on my journey to being smoke free, I will pick myself up and start anew and still be one step closer to my goal.

I affirm my right to a healthy body, mind, and spirit and quitting smoking is a step toward achieving that right.

Everyone receives negative messages that stay with them from childhood. Affirmations are a form of positive self talk that combats the negative self talk that we all have, by using these affirmations as many times as you can every day or whenever you get the urge to smoke, they will become part of your belief system. You can say these affirmations out loud, write them down, or simply read them to yourself.

If you could get up the courage to begin, you have the courage to succeed. (David Viscott)

Yes I Can! - Daily Affirmations to Guide Your Journey to Wellness

Resources :

Mautner Project, the national lesbian health organization. The project offers smoking cessation and can make referrals to national programs providing smoking cessation services to the LGBT community.

www.mautnerproject.org

www.shecicle.com

or call (202-332-5536)

Quit.com. A quit site for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender smokers.

<https://quit.medschool.ucsf.edu/>

Smokefree.gov - This is the federal government's quit site which contains valuable information and

<http://www.smokefree.gov/>

The Smoking Quitline of the National Cancer Institute 1-877-44U-QUIT

The Spirit Health Education Circle is a program of the Mautner Project, the national lesbian health organization

1707 L Street, NW, Suite 230
Washington, DC 20036

www.shecicle.com



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IT'S ALL

Smoking Cessation



Wouldn't Take Nothing For My Journey Now!

Maya Angelou
diff-

"I loved

to smoke. I smoked

3-4 packs a day for 28

years. Cigarettes were my

best friend, I had them wherever

I went. I got mad if I went some-

where and I wasn't able to smoke,

like a friend's house or car. Sometimes

I just wouldn't go. If there was an hour

wait for the smoking section in a resta-

rant, I would wait. Then one day

everything changed.

One night when I was

getting ready for bed I noticed some

bleeding in the back of my mouth. A friend

of mine had throat cancer from smoking so I

was terrified that the same thing was

happening to me. I basically became too

scared to smoke. I stopped cold turkey

that day. Although it turned out not to be

cancer, I realized that if I could stop for

one day I could stop for two days.

Then it turned into three days. I

have never smoked again and it

has been more than 10 years

now. I never believed it

while I was smoking,

but I really can tell

LaTonya, 45 year old Ex-Smoker.

ference: I don't
have a cough any-
more, and I breathe a lot
better. I really never thought
I would be an
ex-smoker. I mean I smoked for
more than half my life! I had tried to
quit before but I never stayed quit.
Something would happen, some crisis at
work, or fight with my girlfriend and I
would start smoking again. I would feel
like such a failure. But I have since found
out that it takes most people several tries at
quitting before they actually quit for good.
After I quit for good I had to find other ways
to deal with stressful situations. Sometimes
I just had to pray for help or meditate. It got
better though. I think the important this is
to keep trying. I learned a lot about
myself - that I am stronger than I thought.
Now that I don't smoke I can spend all
that cigarette money on other things."

