How Quitting Tobacco Can Improve Your Mental Health

“Approximately 25% of adults in the U.S. have some form of mental illness or substance use disorder*, and these adults consume almost 40% of all cigarettes smoked by adults.”

(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

1. Common Myths

**MYTH:** “People with mental illnesses and substance use disorders aren’t interested in quitting smoking and can’t quit.”

**FACT:** Behavioral health consumers are interested in quitting smoking and can quit successfully.

**MYTH:** “Quitting smoking interferes with other treatments for mental illnesses and substance use disorders.”

**FACT:** Quitting smoking can actually improve mental health and substance recovery.

**MYTH:** “Smoking is less harmful than other addictive substances.”

**FACT:** Heart disease, lung disease, and cancer, all of which can be caused by smoking, are the biggest killers of people with mental health issues.

2. How Smoking Can Affect Medications

Chemicals in cigarette smoke can drive psychotropic** medications to leave the body faster.

Meet Joe. Joe drinks coffee to keep going throughout his day.
He also smokes. Recently, he successfully quit smoking.

After quitting smoking, Joe still drank a lot of coffee.

He started having headaches and trouble sleeping. He decided to drink less coffee.

This process is similar to how the body of people who smoke handles caffeine.

1. Joe’s headaches went away and he slept better.
2. He had the same energy, but with less coffee.
3. His health improved from quitting smoking, and he saved more money from having less coffee.

A similar process can happen with some mental health medications.

3. Benefits of Quitting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling in Control of Your Life</th>
<th>Long-Term Abstinence from Alcohol and Other Drugs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increases</td>
<td>Increases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreases</td>
<td>Decreases</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical &amp; Mental Health</th>
<th>Depression Anxiety Stress</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increases</td>
<td>Increases</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decreases</td>
<td>Decreases</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Amount of Medications &amp; Side Effects</th>
<th>Premature Death</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increases</td>
<td>Increases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreases</td>
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4. If at first you don’t succeed, quit, quit again!

- Permanently quitting smoking can take several attempts
- Every attempt increases the chance of successfully quitting smoking
- Use of certain quit-tobacco medications and counseling have been found to be effective
- Behavioral health consumers may have unique challenges when quitting smoking and often benefit from more tailored quit smoking plans

Tell your healthcare provider if you smoke

*“Mental illness is any diagnosable mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder. Substance use disorder is a dependence on, or abuse of alcohol or illicit drugs. (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) **Psychotropic medications are any medication capable of affecting the mind, emotions, and/or behavior. (MedicineNet)

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