

Living Tobacco Free: A Toolkit for Military and Veteran Family Caregivers



Discovering practical solutions that work for you

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“It is harder to quit with the added stress of being a Caregiver. Plus, some of the only times I connect with my spouse is when we smoke together.”

—Caregiver & Spouse of a Veteran



Introduction

Dear Family Caregiver:

Welcome to the Easterseals' Living Tobacco Free Toolkit for Military and Veteran Family Caregivers.

Easterseals is pleased to offer this toolkit for the Caregivers of Military Service Members and Veterans who are considering quitting smoking and tobacco use, who are in the process of giving up tobacco entirely, or who have already begun a Tobacco-Free life and are seeking additional support to stay on track.

Family and informal Caregivers play an essential role in the care of wounded, ill, and injured Service Members and Veterans. Recognizing this, Easterseals has expanded its services to provide support for your personal health needs. Given the challenges, pressures, and stress of caregiving, Easterseals understands that choosing to live a Tobacco-Free life can be an incredibly difficult endeavor to carry out alone.

This toolkit is designed to help you as a Caregiver move toward a Tobacco-Free life. We've always believed that when setting personal goals, all of life's factors must be considered. With our friends at the CVS Health Foundation and the American Lung Association, Easterseals is proud and honored to offer you resources that fit your abilities and goals.

On behalf of Easterseals, we want to thank you for the loving and unconditional sacrifices you make each day to care for our Military Service Members and Veterans. In caring for our nation's heroes, who fought and were injured to protect our freedom, you, the Caregiver, are a hero too.

Thank you for your service. We hope this toolkit encourages, strengthens, and bolsters you on your journey to living a healthy, Tobacco-Free life.



“Daily stress as a Caregiver makes it hard to quit, but you and only you have to decide you want to quit.”

—Caregiver & Spouse of a Veteran



In collaboration with the American Lung Association.

FACTSHEET 1

Easterseals is here to help you break Tobacco Dependence!

Our Mission

Easterseals has a long history of supporting Veterans and their families in all areas of life and is especially committed to your health and wellness. The goal of our program is to not only raise awareness of the higher incidence of smoking among the Veterans and families we serve, but to **make a difference in your lives by giving you practical tools that will support your choice of living healthier, Tobacco-Free lives.** With support from CVS Health Foundation and ALA, we can now offer this tobacco and smoking cessation toolkit for **Military Family Caregivers.**

How it Works:

- With help from ALA's program, Freedom From Smoking¹; accessing information about tobacco and smoking cessation is easier than ever!
 - **You choose the format.** We direct you to programs in your local communities, including in rural areas.
 - **You can access our online materials** if you prefer to go electronic.
 - **You should not be limited in your choice to live a healthier lifestyle.** We ensure accessibility of both the online program materials and the facilities where in-person programs are held. We want to offer our program to the broadest range of audience possible.
- You know better than anyone that being a Caregiver, although a tremendously rewarding experience, can bring about a lot of stress in your life. Easterseals is here to support you! In our tobacco and smoking cessation program, we want to empower your choice as a Caregiver, to focus on your own health and that of your loved ones. So that you—and the Veterans you care for—can lead longer, happier, and healthier lives.

Many of Easterseals' constituents, specifically people with disabilities, Veterans, and Family Caregivers have a higher incidence of smoking



Ready to Quit?

¹ Accessible at www.easterseals.com/stopsmoking

FACTSHEET 1 CONTINUED

- **Today**—Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of death and disease in the US todayⁱⁱ, with an estimated 49.2 million everyday tobacco usersⁱⁱⁱ.
- **2014 CVS Goes Smoke Free Nationwide**—In February of 2014, CVS Pharmacy announced that by October 2014, they would no longer sell tobacco products. By September 2014 all of their CVS Pharmacy locations (nearly 8,000) were Tobacco Free!
- **May 2015 CVS Pharmacy Helps Others Go Smoke Free**—In 2015 Easterseals launched our National Smoking Cessation Program on *Easterseals.com/stopsmoking* with the help of our partner CVS Health Foundation, and in collaboration with American Lung Association (ALA) to highlight their Freedom From Smoking online program.
- **Fall 2016**—We are pleased to now extend our Tobacco and Smoking Cessation program to **Military and Veteran Family Caregivers**.



2014



CVS Goes Smoke Free Nationwide!

2015



CVS Pharmacy Helps Others Go Smoke Free

2016



Extend program to Military and Veteran Family Caregivers

ⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (2016, Feb. 17) Smoking & Tobacco Use, Fast Facts, Retrieved from: http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/fast_facts/

ⁱⁱⁱ Hu SS, Neff L, Agaku IT, et al. (2016) Tobacco Product Use Among Adults—United States, 2013–2014. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2016; 65:685–691. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6527a1>

FACTSHEET 2

Tobacco Use and Military Caregiving— A Unique Relationship

- As a Caregiver, you may be a family member, friend or neighbor providing a range of care or assistance for a Service Member or Veteran. The person you are caring for may have a physical or mental wound, injury, or illness as a result from their service to our country. In addition to being the Caregiver for a Veteran, you may also juggle raising a family, caregiving for an elderly parent, as well as keeping a job outside the home. Your Veteran's road to recovery may seem uncertain and your responsibilities endless.
- Easterseals recognizes the pressure that you may be facing including physical, emotional, and financial stress. We also know that you may be sacrificing your own physical and emotional health. We are here to help.
- When a caregiving situation is especially complicated and stressful, emotional, mental, and physical health problems are very likely to arise. These health risks can hinder your ability to provide care and affect both your quality of life you and that of the loved one you care for.
- You already know that caregiving is a stressful responsibility and below we explain the correlation between stress and tobacco dependence.
- This stressful role in your life may have caused you to seek out a physical comfort—one of the stress-relievers that you may turn to is smoking. This has been confirmed by the results of our Many Faces of Caregiving Study¹ which included data on the challenges of caregiving.
- Among the top challenges that Caregivers reported from the study include increased anxiety, stress, poor sleep, less time to exercise, and a concern about feeling unprepared to be a Caregiver.

Caregivers: Top Challenges of Caregiving

Less time for self

Increased anxiety/
stress and poor sleep

Financial impact

Less time to exercise

Higher rate of smoking among
Male Caregivers



¹ Easterseals' Many Faces of Caregiving Study, <http://www.easterseals.com/explore-resources/for-caregivers/caregiving-study-2015.html?referrer=https://www.google.com/>

FACTSHEET 2 CONTINUED

- Smoking was reported as one of those “comforts” Caregivers use to relieve stress. In the study, Male Caregivers, in particular, reported a higher rate of smoking to deal with the stresses of caregiving. We want to empower you to focus on your own journey to quit tobacco and we know this does not happen in a vacuum—especially if your Veteran smokes too.
- One factor that makes the smoking cessation journey different for you as Caregivers is your **interdependent relationship** with your Veteran. Your Veteran may smoke, you may smoke alone or you may smoke together. Quitting together or alone can present a distinct challenge.
- Another significant factor is the impact of secondhand exposure. Due to the interdependency of your relationship, escaping secondhand exposure may present a difficult challenge. The nature of smoking and sense-based triggers creates an additional barrier to quitting when others around you continue to smoke.
- Finally, there is the distinct historical connection between the Military and tobacco use (see Factsheet 3).

**A Unique Dyad:
Caregivers and Veterans**

**Caregiving is the journey of an
interdependent relationship**

Veteran may smoke

Caregiver may smoke

Stopping together or alone

Secondhand exposure



“The first year was the hardest. I still got yearnings for a long time. I am now in my 60s and am so glad I gave it up! I don’t think I would be able to care for my son if I had not quit smoking because of the medical issues that I would have experienced. As a caregiver we all need every ounce of energy and health we can get. Taking care of ourselves is paramount to being able to take care of our loved ones.”

—Caregiver and Mother of a Veteran

FACTSHEET 3

The U.S. Military History with Tobacco and Smoking

If you are a Caregiver caring for a Military Service Member or Veteran who smokes or uses tobacco, we share here a historical background to help explain why Military members and in turn, yourself, may be more susceptible to tobacco use.



Timeline

World War I and II

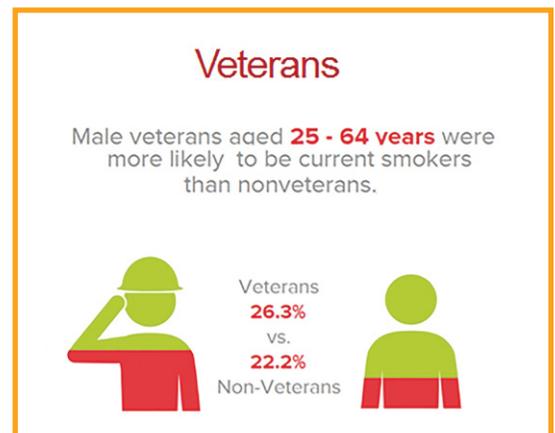
- Since World War I, tobacco companies have targeted U.S. Military personnel—their efforts began by providing cigarettes in Military rations. By the end of the First World War 14 million cigarettes were being handed out to troops each day.

Vietnam and Korean Era

- Through the Korean War and Vietnam conflict, the Military continued to include cigarettes in soldier's rations until 1975.
- The Military's policy of including cigarettes in Military rations was suspended in 1975, and the Military began to implement tobacco control efforts in 1986, yet tobacco use remained high and widely accepted.
- The Military began to perceive tobacco use as a factor that lead to readiness impairment, a decrease in performance, and reduction in productivity of active-duty and civilian personnel. Among Veteran populations, as you may know, the use of tobacco exacerbates pre-existing health problems and can lead to the rise of further health complications.

Gulf War

- In 1990, during the Gulf War, the Department of Defense discontinued the practice of free distribution of cigarettes during wartime by the Military. So the tobacco companies distributed free cigarettes to soldiers in Saudi Arabia themselves, and when troops came home they distributed their products at "welcome home" events.



FACTSHEET 3 CONTINUED

Post 9/11 Conflicts

- Shortly after the Iraq invasion in 2003, the tobacco industry sent smokeless tobacco to deployed Marines in Iraq.
- After these events, efforts were made in Congress to prevent distribution to Military members. In 2009 the Tobacco Control Act was signed which now prohibits the free distribution of cigarettes and restricts the distribution of free smokeless tobacco.

How does this affect the Caregivers and Veterans?

- In general, Military personnel deployed to combat since September 11, 2001 are more often current and heavy cigarette smokers than personnel who were not combat deployed.
- Military personnel most commonly cite smoking cigarettes to help relax or calm down and to help relieve stress.
- Veterans' use of tobacco products to relieve stress may influence Caregivers to rely on tobacco products as well. The good news is that the Military and Veteran communities recognize this and now offer many resources for living a Tobacco-Free life. Please see our resources list included in this toolkit.
- Many of you may be caring for a Veteran who served in a post-9/11 conflict. This means you are more likely to be: a younger adult (between the ages of 18-30), your needs are different than older caregivers, and you may be lacking in the support systems that are more readily available to older adult caregivers¹. You are also more likely to be caring for a young spouse instead of an aging parent.
- All of these factors may make you more susceptible to using tobacco as a stress-reliever, and subsequently harder, since the typical support systems may seem just out of reach.

Military Personnel

17.3% were former smokers
24.0% were current smokers

Active duty, light- or moderate-smoking personnel cite several reasons why they smoke:



To relieve stress: **74.4%**
To relax or calm down: **75.3%**
To relieve boredom: **55.5%**

2011 Department of Defense Health Related Behaviors Survey of Active Duty Military Personnel

This lack of a support system is something that Easterseals and the American Lung Association think that the Freedom From Smoking program can provide—a safe, supportive, and effective way to help you work towards living a Tobacco-Free life.

¹ Ramchand, R., Tanielian, T., Fisher, M., et al. (2014). *Hidden Heroes: America's Military Caregivers*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR499.html.

FACTSHEET 4

Staying Informed Part I: Emerging, Smokeless and Alternative Tobacco Products

- One of our goals is to inform Military Caregivers about emerging trends in tobacco use and the effects tobacco can have on your health and that of your families. The more you are informed, the more can protect yourself and your loved ones. We understand that a scare-tactic approach does not lead to results among users, but education is vital.
- Across the United States, it may seem that electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) stores, vaporizer (“vape”) shops, or hookah cafés are popping up on every corner. These trendy establishments have reached over 6,000–7,000 stores nationwide, not including retail drug, food, or convenience stores or online sales. The tobacco industry continues to create new, slick methods to entice you to their products.
- **“While significant declines in cigarette smoking have occurred among U.S. adults during the past five decades, the use of emerging tobacco products has increased in recent yearsⁱ.”**



What are Emerging, Alternative and Smokeless tobacco products?

- Emerging, smokeless, and alternative tobacco products may include:
 - Electronic Smoking Devices: e-cigarettes and vape pens.
 - Smokeless tobacco: Snus, snuff, and various chewing tobaccos.
 - Dissolvable tobacco products: Sticks, Orbs, and Strips. Orbs look like candy and sticks appear like toothpicks dipped in tobacco, while strips are similar to breath strips.
 - Hookah is water pipe used to smoke tobacco through cooled water.
 - Little cigars, cigarillos and large cigars. Large cigar use is relatively common in military communities.



ⁱⁱ Bahrke MS, Baur TS, Poland DF, et al. (1988) Tobacco use and performance on the US Army physical fitness test. *Mil Med* 153:229–235.

FACTSHEET 4 CONTINUED

Impact and Health Implications:

- Little cigars and cigarillos were originally intended to be a replacement for cigarettes, with the intended ban on marketing. However, these products have 12–25 times higher the amount of nicotine in them than cigarettes. These products are cheaper and come in sweet flavors to make smoking more attractive to users.
- The amount of nicotine ingested during use of smokeless tobacco is 3 to 4 times more than the amount delivered from a cigarette.
- e-Cigarettes are being marketed as a safer way of smoking or a cessation aid; however the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not approved them as a cessation aid. The long-term health impacts are still unknown for e-cigarettes.
- Because very little is known about the use and health consequences of many of new and emerging tobacco products, it is crucial to understand the potential dangers of exposure for yourself, your children, your pets, and other people that may be exposed through your Caregiving duties.

Military use of emerging tobacco products:

- e-cigarette use is incredibly high within the Armed Forces—its usage rate is as high as 27%. By comparison, only 3% of the civilian population uses e-cigarettes. Due to the percentage use in the military, many Veterans continue to use e-cigarettes when they return home, and the practice affects family life.ⁱⁱ
- As a Military Caregiver, this puts your health at risk if you are either using a smokeless tobacco product or are exposed to the side effects of this. Military Caregivers surveyed informally by Easterseals reported that using e-cigarettes made it harder to quit tobacco use altogether.

Susceptibility of children/young adults:

- We know that many Caregivers are also raising children while juggling caregiving duties. 39% of post-9/11 Caregivers, 23% of pre-9/11 Caregivers, and 27% of civilian Caregivers reported having a child under 18 who lived with them.ⁱⁱⁱ

ⁱⁱ Beggs, M. *Tobacco Free Military: Opportunities for Helping Service Members and Veterans Quit Tobacco*. [8] Retrieved from: www.projectuniform.org

ⁱⁱⁱ Ramchand, Rajeev, Terri L. Tanielian, Michael P. Fisher, Christine Anne Vaughan, Thomas Trail, Caroline Epley, Phoenix Voorhies, Michael William Robbins, Eric Robinson, and Bonnie Ghosh-Dastidar. *Rand Corporation Research Report Series*. Vol. RR-499-TEDF, Hidden Heroes: America's Military Caregivers. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2014. Accessed September 6, 2016.

FACTSHEET 4 CONTINUED

- Young adults aged 18–24 years reported the highest prevalence of use of emerging tobacco products, including water pipes/hookahs, and e-cigarettes.^{iv}
- While the FDA enacted legislation in 2016 to further protect minors from purchasing smoke e-cigarettes, cigars, hookah, pipe tobacco, nicotine gels, and dissolvables, youth still remain a target audience and are at risk.
- Youth are also susceptible to the many flavored tobacco products on the market which include kid-friendly flavors such as candy, chocolate, and fruity flavors similar to popular candy.
- Hookah smoking has many of the same health risks as cigarette smoking. The amount of smoke inhaled during a typical hookah session is about 90,000 milliliters (ml), compared with 500–600 ml inhaled when smoking a cigarette.^{vi}



^{iv} Hu SS, Neff L, Agaku IT, et al. (2016) Tobacco Product Use Among Adults—United States, 2013–2014. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2016; 65:685-691. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6527a1>

^{vi} Cobb, C., Ward, K. D., Maziak, W., et al. (2010). Waterpipe Tobacco Smoking: An Emerging Health Crisis in the United States. *American Journal of Health Behavior*, 34(3), 275–285.

FACTSHEET 5

Staying Informed Part 2: Impact of Secondhand Smoke

What do we mean when we say firsthand, secondhand, or third-hand smoke?

Firsthand smoke or tobacco:

- Inhaled
- Refers to what is inhaled into the smoker's own lungs

Secondhand Smoke:

- Exhalation and side-stream
- For example, smoke that comes off a burning cigarette while sitting in the ash tray or is inhaled after a smoker's exhalation.

Third-hand Smoke:

- Residue left on surfaces
- For example, the contamination on the surfaces of objects that remains after the second-hand smoke has cleared.
- It is extremely difficult to eliminate and clean. Studies found that even two months after smokers moved out of a home or an apartment, smoke particles can be detected in dust.
- Clings to hair, skin, clothes, furniture, drapes, walls, bedding, carpets, dust, vehicles and other surfaces. Infants, children and nonsmoking adults may be at risk of tobacco-related health problems when they inhale, ingest or touch substances containing thirdhand smoke.ⁱ



Firsthand smoke
or tobacco



Secondhand
Smoke



Third-hand
Smoke

Secondhand Smoke Factsⁱⁱ:

Secondhand smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals. Hundreds are toxic and about 70 can cause cancer. Since the 1964 Surgeon General's Report, 2.5 million adults who were non-smokers died because they inhaled secondhand smoke.

ⁱ What is thirdhand smoke, and why is it a concern? (2014, July 10), Mayo Clinic, Retrieved from: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/expert-answers/third-hand-smoke/faq-20057791>

ⁱⁱ Health Effects of Secondhand Smoke, (2016, Feb. 17) Smoking & Tobacco Use, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Retrieved from: http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/health_effects/index.htm

FACTSHEET 5 CONTINUED

Secondhand smoke and your heart:

- Exposure to secondhand smoke has immediate adverse effects on the cardiovascular system and can cause coronary heart disease and stroke.
- Secondhand smoke causes nearly 34,000 premature deaths from heart disease each year in the United States among non-smokers.
- Non-smokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke at home or at work increase their risk of developing heart disease by 25–30%.
- Secondhand smoke increases the risk for stroke by 20–30%.
- Secondhand smoke exposure causes more than 8,000 deaths from stroke annually.
- Even brief exposure to secondhand smoke can damage the lining of blood vessels and cause your blood platelets to become stickier. These changes can lead to a fatal heart attack.
- People who already have heart disease are especially at high risk of suffering adverse effects from breathing secondhand smoke and should take special precautions to avoid even brief exposures.

Secondhand smoke and your lungs:

- Secondhand smoke causes lung cancer in adults who have never smoked.
- Nonsmokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke at home or at work increase their risk of developing lung cancer by 20–30%.
- Secondhand smoke causes more than 7,300 lung cancer deaths among U.S. nonsmokers each year.
- Nonsmokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke are inhaling many of the same cancer-causing substances and poisons as smokers.
- Even brief secondhand smoke exposure can damage cells in ways that set the cancer process in motion.
- As with active smoking, the longer the duration and the higher the level of exposure to secondhand smoke, the greater the risk of developing lung cancer.

Children and Secondhand Smoke:

- Secondhand smoke can cause serious health problems in children.
- Chemicals in secondhand smoke appear to affect the brain in ways that interfere with its regulation of infants' breathing. Risk of Asthma: Secondhand smoke causes numerous health problems in infants and children, including more frequent and severe asthma attacks, respiratory infections, ear infections, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

FACTSHEET 5 CONTINUED

“It is a horrible struggle that is so easily triggered with our extremely unpredictable struggling daily life.”

—Caregiver of a Veteran



- Smoking during pregnancy results in more than 1,000 infant deaths annually. Infants whose mothers smoked during pregnancy are three times more likely to die of SIDS than those of non-smoking mothers.
- Studies show that older children whose parents smoke get sick more often. Their lungs grow less than children who do not breathe secondhand smoke, and they get more bronchitis and pneumonia.
- Wheezing and coughing are more common in children who breathe secondhand smoke.
- Secondhand smoke can trigger an asthma attack in a child. Children with asthma who are around secondhand smoke have more severe and frequent asthma attacks. A severe asthma attack can put a child's life in danger.
- Children whose parents smoke around them get more ear infections. They also have fluid in their ears more often and have more operations to put in ear tubes for drainage.
- Many military caregivers that we surveyed cited their children as their number one reason to quit smoking or using tobacco products.

Pets and Secondhand smoke:

- Pets are part of your family too! Your Veteran may even benefit from the use of a service or therapy pet. Researchers have found that exposure to tobacco smoke has been associated with certain cancers in dogs and cats; allergies in dogs; and eye and skin diseases and respiratory problems in birds.

TIP SHEET 1

What Works and What Doesn't When it Comes to Stopping Tobacco Use

The following tip sheets are meant to provide you, as a Military and Veteran Caregiver, practical, actionable, and easy-to-use tools, as you consider your journey to becoming Tobacco Free. This tool is also meant to be helpful for those who are recommitting themselves to quitting tobacco. We recognize the unique challenges of ending your tobacco use while caregiving so this tool aims to assist along the various steps that you may find yourself overcoming today.

What works?

It is important to remember that what works for one person will not always work for another. Each person's journey towards leading a Tobacco-Free life is unique.

- **Education and Skills Building**—You are working on this step right now! By educating yourself and learning ways and methods to quit based on others' experiences you are one step closer to being tobacco free. You will learn that in some instances, what works for one person won't necessarily work for another. You will build, practice, and hone the necessary skills of living a tobacco-free life through your journey.
- **Support**—Despite any setbacks or relapses that may occur, a key aspect of being Tobacco Free is having friends and family know that you need their support throughout your entire journey. You can also share this toolkit with your friends and family as a way to educate them and also utilize in your conversation about support.
- **Planning:**
 - Decide and select a firm date for stopping tobacco use. Perhaps make the date coincide with another meaningful event in your life such as an anniversary, child's birthday, or around the holidays.
 - Set your intention—end your tobacco use in honor or memory of someone. Perhaps a child, loved one, or even family pet! Alternatively, some of the Caregivers we surveyed indicated that just doing it for themselves was a strong, motivating factor.
 - Before your stop date, be sure to wash all the clothes that you have previously smoked around.

TIP SHEET 1 CONTINUED

- If you smoke in the home and/or your car, clean both before the day that you stop smoking. Dispose of tobacco and smoking devices including lighters, cigarettes, and pipes ahead of your stop date.
- If possible, make a dental appointment to have your teeth cleaned before your stop date.
- Talk to family, friends and the person you are caring for to let them know your plan to quit using tobacco. Inform them of any support you may anticipate needing from them—your request may even be for simple words of encouragement.
- Make a plan—whether you decide to use our ALA's *Freedom From Smoking* online tool, medication, nicotine gum, or any other known method, write it down! Post it where you and others can see it and monitor your progress. This will help by creating accountability and harnessing the support of those who around you.
- Make your plan realistic and set personal goals as well as rewards for yourself.
- Conduct your own research—the references in this tool-kit are a great start. You will find that there are many mobile applications, websites, in-person and online programs, medicines and alternative methods that can help you significantly. Exploring what is feasible for you and what fits your lifestyle is a strong foundation to build change upon. We hope that the resources in this guide can assist and facilitate your decision for a Tobacco-Free life!!
- It is important to remember that most of the physical withdrawal symptoms pass after the first 3–5 days, so if you can make it through those by hydrating, exercising, and keeping busy—you're well on your way to being Tobacco Free¹.
- Learn to identify your smoking triggers: These cues or triggers can be *anything* that leads you to take a cigarette out of the pack and smoke. This is a crucial aspect of quitting your tobacco use. Write these down or perhaps create a journal for yourself. Be creative and make notes on your daily schedules, calendars or even mobile phone.
- Obstacles: Identify what factors may be a barrier for you to stop smoking so you can plan to address them. These may include: withdrawal symptoms, fear of failure, weight gain, lack of support, depression, enjoyment of tobacco, close proximity to other tobacco users. Seek support from others and the resources included in this toolkit.
- Relapse is more common than you think. Don't beat yourself up! See our tip sheet on relapse for more information.

¹ <https://quitsmokingcommunity.org/how-to-quit-smoking/nicotine-withdrawal-timeline-symptoms/>

TIP SHEET 1 CONTINUED

We surveyed Military and Veteran Caregivers inquiring what worked for them on their journey to stop using tobacco. Please keep in mind, everyone's journey is unique! This is how your peers responded:

- Several respondents said quitting cold turkey worked for them while others said gradual reduction was a more manageable approach.
- Personal experiences of others—hearing stories about friends and family members quitting or trying quit was motivation for them
- Caregivers said their children were their motivation to stop using tobacco, and additionally a number of respondents indicated that they quit using tobacco for themselves.
- Finances! A main reason people want to quit is money. For example, the average pack of cigarettes in Illinois= \$11.50. One pack per day for one year = \$4198.00ⁱⁱ Calculate how much you spend each year on tobacco products as a potential motivator!
- One Caregiver said seeking her family's support worked, "Determination is key-my husband (the Veteran) was very supportive."
- Several respondents listed nicotine patches, medicine, hypnosis, and in-person support training as helpful tools. See our Resources Sheet at the end of this toolkit for more information.
- "Time helps! Nicotine is an addictive drug!"
- "The desire to look and smell good, be able to exercise and eat healthy, and the desire to have clean teeth."
- Respondents mentioned that tracking their progress on mobile applications on their phone gave them a tangible sense of accomplishment and accountability. We do not endorse any one mobile application. Join the Military Veteran Caregiver Network to find out which mobile applications your fellow Caregivers are using!



"The desire to look and smell good, be able to exercise and eat healthy, and the desire to have clean teeth."

—Caregiver & Spouse of a Veteran

Always consult your doctor before you or Veteran consider using a medication.

ⁱⁱ <http://fairreporters.net/health/prices-of-cigarettes-by-state/>

TIP SHEET 1 CONTINUED

- “My husband’s mother passed away from lung and heart problems. I decided I couldn’t do that to him twice.”
- “I always smoked outside so I needed to force myself to find a new way to take mental breaks.”
- Every smoker can quit. It’s not going to be easy, and it might not be done on the first try, but every person possesses the capability to quit.
- You don’t have to quit alone. Tell friends and family about your plan to quit! There is a wide array of resources and techniques available to you.
- One size doesn’t fit all. You may end up applying several different techniques and you should not limit yourself to a single, unilateral approach. “You had to learn to smoke, so you have to learn to quit.”

What doesn’t work?

- We know that scaring people, gross pictures, judgement, nagging, and ultimatums do not work when trying to help someone quit using tobacco. Our aim is to support you in reaching your own decision through education and support.
- We are not here to state the obvious—that smoking is bad for you is no longer a little-known fact. The decision to quit has to be a personal one. If the reasons aren’t directly applicable to your life, it may prove much harder to hold yourself accountable. We do not want to put you or the Veteran you care for in a defensive stance against ending tobacco use.

Military and Veteran Caregivers have also indicated that the following did not work for them during their journey:

- For some, quitting cold turkey, nicotine patches, and medicine did NOT work. While others found that gradual reduction was not for them. Once again, this supports the notion that you have to identify what works best for you personally.
- Many Caregivers recognized judgment and criticism as tactics that did not encourage them to quit smoking.
- Being around others who smoke. Many Caregivers mentioned that their spouse’s continued use of tobacco creates a challenging environment. In some cases, the spouse was the Veteran or Service Member being cared for.



“My husband’s mother passed away from lung and heart problems. I decided I couldn’t do that to him twice. I always smoked outside so I needed to force myself to find a new way to take mental breaks.”

—Caregiver & Spouse of a Veteran

TIP SHEET 2

Managing Your Stress to Avoid Tobacco Use

Caregiving is stressful! Stress is a normal physical response to the many challenges you face on a daily basis. Through an informal survey of Military and Veteran Caregivers, we understand that a significant amount of Caregivers who use tobacco products regard the daily stress of caregiving as a unique factor in their journey to quitting tobacco, as compared to non-Caregivers. The *Many Faces of Caregiving Study* conducted by Easterseals in 2015 identified increased anxiety and stress as two of the top three ways that caregiving can impact the lives of Caregivers.

As you work towards becoming Tobacco Free there are tools, strategies, and techniques that can help you manage the stress in your life. They may not make specific problems or challenges go away, and they won't cure a loved one who has a disability or who is ill, but they will help to build your resilience.



When we talk about managing stress, **resilience** is an important concept; it's the ability to adapt to and cope with stressful situations and adversity. Think of resilience like a muscle; it takes practice to build it up over time, but it helps you become stronger and increases your capacity to deal with future difficult experiences.

What are some of the stressors associated with Caregiving and obstacles to avoiding stress?

External:

- Money
- Family dynamics
- The care needs of the Veteran and/or children at home
- Not enough time in the day
- The medical system
- Changes in the Veteran's personality or cognitive abilities
- Legal matters



TIP SHEET 2 CONTINUED

Internal

Some common internal sources of stress for Caregivers include:

- Intense worry
- Anger
- Fear
- Poor health
- Unrealistic expectations
- Self-criticism
- Lack of self-care

An essential step in managing stress is identifying what causes it. Sources of stress can be external (events and situations) or internal (your response). When you can identify your sources of stress, you can then begin to figure out what you **can** and **cannot** change in your life. You may find that when attempting to change things over which you have no control, you're likely to increase your stress and frustration.

We cannot control events or situations, but we can control our response to them. As a Caregiver, you probably have a never-ending "to-do" list of responsibilities. Stress management may feel like one more thing that you don't have time for in your schedule. When stopping tobacco use, it can be helpful to understand what may be getting in the way of addressing the sources of stress in your life. Common obstacles to addressing sources of stress may include:

- Choosing tobacco to deal with stress
- Lack of time!
- Can't think of what to do
- Putting off a stress-relieving activity
- Choosing an activity that doesn't fit your life or isn't realistic
- Feeling like you don't deserve to do things just for you



**"You and only you have to
decide you want to quit."**

—Caregiver & Spouse of a Veteran

TIP SHEET 2 CONTINUED

Tips for Managing Stress During Your Journey to Living Tobacco Free:

We recognize that as a Military and Veteran Caregiver you may not have the resources that are available to others in terms of stress relief, especially during your path towards quitting tobacco. A vacation or even a dinner out with friends may seem unattainable. Here are quick stress-relief activities you CAN do to aid in quitting tobacco.

- Go for a walk or exercise
- Spend time outside
- Take a long, hot bath
- Play with a pet
- Work in your garden
- Read a book
- Listen to music
- Stay connected to friends (even if just online!)
- Use respite care to get breaks
- Join a support group
- See a therapist
- Cook your favorite meal
- Set limits
- Take time to laugh or share a joke
- Deep breathing and other relaxation techniques
- Meditation
- Accept help from friends and family
- Journaling or arts and crafts
- Yoga or tai chi
- Massage or self-massage
- Spiritual practices or faith/prayer
- Expressing gratitude for something in your life
- Play an instrument

- **Breathing exercises**—A quick way to relax and can be done anywhere. Breathe deeply from your abdomen to get as much fresh air and oxygen into your lungs as possible. Then completely expel all the air in your lungs on your exhale breath.
- **Muscle relaxation through stretching and basic yoga poses**—This is an easy-to-do technique that can be combined with breathing exercises to help fall asleep.
- **Aromatherapy**—Essential oils have been shown to relieve anxiety, stress, and depression.
- **Journaling**—Document observations, thoughts and emotions. Journaling can be public such as an online blog or a private diary. This can become part of your daily routine, or purely when you are inspired to write/share. Journaling can be quick such as making a list of things you are grateful for or frustrated by. You can even tear up what you have written and experience the release emotions through the act of writing and tossing.
- **Soothing Sensory Touch**—examples include rubbing the back of your neck, give yourself a bear hug and squeeze yourself down the length of your arms, exercise your hands through hand self-massage.

TIP SHEET 2 CONTINUED

Personal Action Plan—As a Caregiver, you have many demands on your time and energy. Remembering to focus some of that time and energy on your own physical and emotional health takes effort. Writing out a goal for yourself and defining the necessary steps involved can serve as a reminder for you to work on managing your stress and can help you regain the sense of control in your life. You can use the “Notes” section of this toolkit to sketch out your personal action plan.

- What personal goal would you like to accomplish in the next six months? This may be something along the lines of “switching from e-cigarettes to no nicotine” or “join a smoking cessation support group online” to something as simple as “work on my art.” Goals should be specific and attainable. Your goals should answer the questions:
 - What are you going to do?
 - How often are you going to do it?
 - When will you do it? Sketch out the answers to, “My goal is...” and “The steps I can stake to meet my goal include...”



Remember to keep your goals and steps realistic for you. The aim in goalsetting is to ignite inner feelings of success. Finding time to exercise every day, for example, may feel daunting, but twice or once a week may feel more achievable.

- Keep in mind as you quit tobacco that other substances such as alcohol and caffeine can also trigger cravings for tobacco use and increase anxiety, leading to the creation of further stress. If possible, cutting back on consumption of unnecessary mood-altering substances can greatly improve your health and well-being.ⁱ
- An easy way to access support if you want to quit smoking or tobacco use is, the American Lung Association’s Freedom From Smoking online program accessible at: www.easterseals.com/stopsmoking.

While you may have originally relied on tobacco as a source for stress relief, leaving it behind may prove to be an even bigger step in reducing the overall amount of stress in your life.

ⁱ <https://www.adaa.org/tips-manage-anxiety-and-stress>

TIP SHEET 3

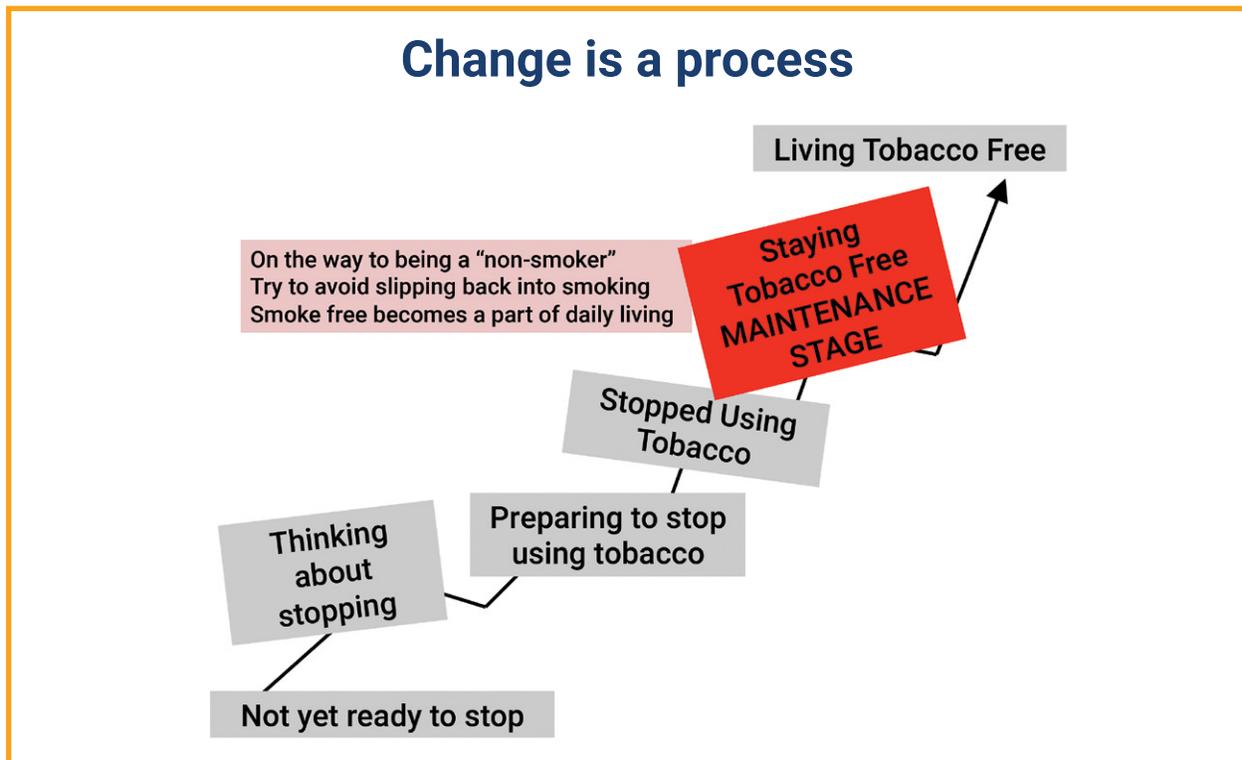
Tips for Staying Tobacco Free

Every moment you don't smoke or use tobacco is a success. Each previous attempt to stop using tobacco is a "practice run" that allows you to learn and adapt so that you can succeed the next time.

Because it may take more than one attempt to be able to fully stop using tobacco, we want to provide you some quick tips for relapse prevention and staying Tobacco Free. Deciding to live a tobacco-free life is just the first step! It is important to have a strong focus on the Maintenance Stage.

Staying Tobacco Free—The Maintenance Stage:

- You have remained Tobacco Free for six months or longer!
- You are trying to avoid slipping back into past behaviors
- Your new behavior is becoming a part of daily living



TIP SHEET 3 CONTINUED

Stages of Going from being a Tobacco User to Tobacco Free

Let's review the process people undergo in transitioning between "I'm a smoker" or "tobacco user" to "I've quit." Once you are Tobacco Free you will be able to...

- Identify & anticipate high-risk situations that may trigger you to smoke or use tobacco;
- Monitor "urges/cravings" to smoke;
- Learn coping responses to triggers and cravings;
- Practice an initial separation from high-risk situations which may be more challenging to Caregivers;
- Know how to deal with and overcome a slip;
- Know that this is a process, not a race;
- Avoid returning to your previous amounts of consumption if you experience a minor slip in your abstinence from tobacco. The goal is for you to learn from the slip, and use the knowledge gained to move forward.

What can you do to help yourself or a loved one in the Maintenance Stage?

- Remind yourself that beginning to smoke again (even one puff) will increase urges and make quitting more difficult than before.
- Focus on the positive aspects of your life.
- Learn about yourself—your stressors, triggers and what makes you calm.
- Find alternative outlets, approaches, and means to handle your problems.
- Never take your recovery for granted!
- Continuously remind yourself why you made the decision to quit smoking.
- Continue to review the health benefits of quitting—you may have even begun to experience such benefits at this point.
- Learn to cope with all of your feelings in a healthy way. This includes the positive and healthy feelings. You can celebrate and grieve without using tobacco.

TIP SHEET 3 CONTINUED

Slip versus Relapse

We want Caregivers to know that a slip is not the same as a relapse. Slips in not using tobacco happen and if you do slip, we want you to know how to move forward without giving up!

A Slip is...

- One instance where you use tobacco after deciding to stop
- Several instances of smoking after deciding to stop
- A mistake
- A learning experience
- Not something worth giving up over

A Relapse is....

- A return to your original levels of smoking (for example, if you smoked a pack a day before deciding to quit, you return to smoking a pack a day after a relapse)
- When you return to your former behavior
- A shift away from “recovery” mindset—return to being a smoker

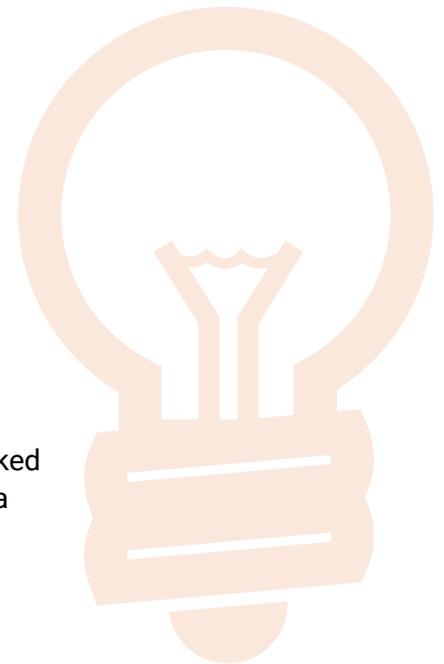
The key difference between relapse and slip is your mindset! If you slip, try to figure out what caused it in hopes of avoiding another.

Three Major Reasons Why People Slip

Negative Mood: As a Caregiver it is hard to always stay positive! After years of smoking and tobacco use, you may find that smoking can alleviate a bad mood—that’s the effect of the nicotine on your emotional health.

Stress: Again, as a Military Caregiver, stress is the reason you turn to tobacco. Stress is the mental, emotional or physical tension we feel in response to a challenging situation. People react to stress very differently, especially when facing challenging situations.

Smoking Cues/Triggers: A trigger can be *anything* that prompts you to reach for a cigarette or tobacco product out of the pack. An important part of quitting smoking is for you to identify your own smoking cues. Over time you will learn to anticipate and cope with problems that pull you toward relapse. You will be most prepared knowing what situations will make you want to smoke before they arise.



TIP SHEET 3 CONTINUED

Monitoring Urges and Cravings:

- You should monitor your urges and cravings to smoke so as to better understand the situations and reasons that reinforce them.
- Those urges and desires to smoke will pass. It usually only takes 3 to 5 minutes for a craving to pass.
- You can overcome those cravings by learning cognitive and behavioral coping responses
- You can identify those responses by writing down the times of day that they are at the biggest risk of lapsing.
- You should also write down five substitutes for any situation in which you might smoke.
- Once you have identified your coping responses it is important to avoid high-risk situations. This will ease the quitting process for you. If you feel like you're about to slip, apply your list of "substitutes" before giving in to the urge to smoke.

"I smoked for 20 plus years, but I gave it up by making a verbal promise to my son, the Veteran, that I would never smoke again. Hardest thing I ever did, but I never smoked again."

—Caregiver & Parent of a Veteran



Resource List: Tobacco-Free Living for Military and Veteran Caregivers

Tobacco-Free Resources Specifically for Military and Veteran Caregivers

Freedom From Smoking

www.easterseals.com/stopsmoking

Freedom From Smoking®, or FFS, is a program specifically designed for adults, like you, who want to quit smoking.

Local American Lung Association offices

www.lung.org/get-involved/in-your-community/

Military and Veteran Caregiver Network (MVCN)

<https://milvetcaregivernetwork.org/>

The Military and Veteran Caregiver Network offers a secure community where military and Veteran Caregivers can connect, share and support one another. We would like to thank the MVCN for establishing an online peer support group specifically for Military Caregivers looking to live a tobacco-free life. **If you are a Military and Veteran Caregiver you can join the network at <https://milvetcaregivernetwork.org/online-community-application>. Once you have become a vetted Caregiver member, you will login to the Network and then search for “Live Tobacco-Free” under “Groups.”**

Give an Hour (GAH)

<http://www.giveanhour.org/>

Give an Hour™ is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) whose mission is to harness the expertise and generosity of volunteer mental health professionals capable of responding to both acute and chronic conditions that arise within our society. Currently, GAH is dedicated to meeting the mental health needs of the troops and families affected by their time of service. We provide counseling to individuals, couples and families, and children and adolescents.

Give an Hour includes a list of providers who specialize in hypnosis and acupuncture, two alternative methods to aid in the tobacco cessation process. These services are free and confidential. <http://www.giveanhour.org/GettingHelp/AlternativeProviders.aspx>.



For Service Members and Veterans

- Veterans enrolled in VA healthcare have access to:
 - Medication and counseling
 - VA's Smoking Quitline 1-855-QUIT VET (1-855-784-8838),
 - Text message support from SmokefreeVET, Sign up at <http://smokefree.gov/vet>
 - www.publichealth.va.gov/smoking/quit
 - Speak with a Quit VET counselor and get:
 - Help developing a quit plan
 - Individualized counseling
 - Strategies to prevent relapse
 - Follow-up calls to help you stay quit
- US Department of Defense campaign
 - www.ucanquit2.org/
 - Savings calculator
 - Live chat
 - Help your Hero Quit
- Freedom Quitline (open to Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Active Duty, Dependents, and Retirees (TRICARE beneficiaries).
 - www.freedomquitline.org
- US Navy/Marine Corps Tobacco Free Living
 - <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/health-promotion/tobacco-free-living/Pages/tobacco-free-living.aspx>
- Project Uniform • <http://projectuniform.org/>
 - Project UNIFORM (Undoing Nicotine Influence From Our Respected Military) creates military-civilian partnerships to address tobacco use in military communities.

For General Tobacco Cessation Resources...

- Center for Disease Control • <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/>
- Through the Affordable Care Act health plans must provide coverage for at least one prescription quit-smoking medication.

Living Tobacco Free: A Toolkit for Military and Veteran Family Caregivers

- 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)
 - Calling this toll-free number will connect you directly to your state quitline. All states have quitlines in place with trained coaches who provide information and help with quitting. Specific services and hours of operation vary from state to state.
- Free Quit Guide from QuitPlan: This extensive 64-page guide builds on many activities and tips we talk about in our toolkit. It has a lot of facts about what to do at each step along the way and worksheets where you can add your own ideas and plans.
 - <https://www.quitplan.com/assets/documents/quitguide-english.pdf>

For Military and Veteran Caregiver Resources...

- Easterseals • www.Easterseals.com/militarycaregiver
- Elizabeth Dole Foundation Hidden Heroes • www.hiddenheroes.org
- VA Caregiver Support • www.caregiver.va.gov or by phone at 1-855-260-3274
- Operation Family Caregiver • www.operationfamilycaregiver.org
- National Military Family Association • www.militaryfamily.org
- Military Families Learning Network
<https://blogs.extension.org/militaryfamilies/military-caregiving/>
- Psych Armor Institute • www.psycharmor.org
- Military and Veteran Caregiver Network • www.milvetcaregivernetwork.org

For General Family Caregiver Resources...

- National Alliance for Caregiving • www.caregiving.org
- Family Caregiver Alliance • www.caregiver.org
- Caregiver Action Network • www.caregiveraction.org
- AARP • www.aarp.org/home-family/caregiving/

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Beginning the journey towards living a Tobacco-Free life is a powerful and profound step. Sharing your experience, emotions, and encouragement with others undertaking the same journey can be healing for you too. In the spirit of support, we would like to extend you an opportunity to share your story with other Caregivers of Service Members and Veterans.

Please email us your story to militarycaregiver@easterseals.com so that we can feature it on our website as inspiration to others.



www.easterseals.com



In partnership with the American Lung Association