



## MHealthy Tobacco Consultation Service **COVID-19 AND TOBACCO USE**



As the COVID-19 pandemic progresses, there has never been a better time to quit smoking or vaping.

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) warns that people of any age who use tobacco are at increased risk of severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19.

COVID-19 is caused by a coronavirus - a term that refers to a family of viruses that produce respiratory infections. There is a wealth of evidence to show that smoking tobacco increases the risk of many respiratory infections and can increase the severity of respiratory diseases. This is because:

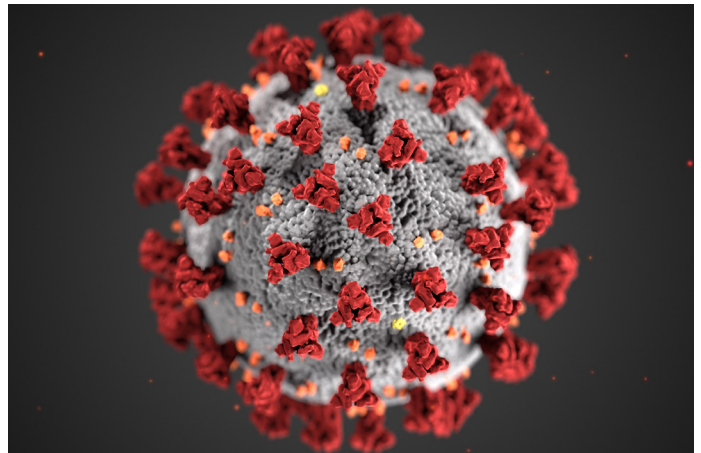
- Smoking and vaping inflame lung tissues and reduces lung capacity.
- Smoking and vaping suppress immune system responses necessary to fighting off infections.

Risk factors for COVID-19, such as cardiovascular disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and diabetes, are all strongly associated with tobacco use. In addition, people who smoke and vape may also be at greater risk of contracting the disease because:

- The act of smoking and vaping means you are touching your face more.

- Tobacco users have significantly elevated ACE2 enzymes on the surface of their lung cells. Researchers found that increased levels of ACE2 enzymes enable the virus to more easily enter lungs, where they cause infection.

A review of multiple studies by public health experts has shown that COVID-19 patients who were smokers were **2.5 times more likely** to be admitted to an



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intensive care unit and require mechanical ventilation than non-smokers. Researchers also found that when the disease worsens, current or former smokers had more acute or critical conditions and death.

### World Health Organization (WHO) is urging all tobacco users to quit now.

Quitting will help your lungs and heart to work better from the moment you stop:

- Within 20 minutes of quitting, elevated heart rate and blood pressure drop.
- After 12 hours, the carbon monoxide level in the bloodstream drops to normal.
- Within 2-12 weeks, circulation improves and lung function increases.
- After 1-9 months, coughing and shortness of breath decrease.
- Quitting will help to protect your loved ones, especially children, from exposure to second-hand smoke.

### Health officials recommend increased coronavirus vigilance for tobacco users:

- Clean your hands often, either with soap and water for 20 seconds or a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Put distance between yourself and other people (at least 6 feet).
- Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around other people who don't live in your household.
- Quit tobacco now.

**There are immediate benefits of quitting tobacco, no matter when it is done. These benefits apply more now than ever.**

For help to quit, call the Tobacco Consultation Service at **(734) 998-6222** or e-mail **[quitsmoking@med.umich.edu](mailto:quitsmoking@med.umich.edu)**

#### References:

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