



**Mount
Sinai**

Concerns about Tobacco and Substance Use

If you are smoking or using any substances such as alcohol, drugs, or prescribed medications, it is important to share this information with your health care team. Research has shown that cancer patients who get help with their substance abuse or smoking addictions have a better outcome from their cancer treatment. Discuss with your health care team the ways in which you can receive help with these issues.

Stopping to Smoke Will:

- **Increase your chances of survival.** Studies have generally shown that individuals who have stopped smoking has lowered their risk of treatment side effects. Also, stopping to smoke can help your cancer treatments be more effective.
- **Lower your risk of developing a secondary cancer.** Quitting to smoke, even at the time of diagnosis, can significantly lower the risk of developing a secondary cancer.
- **Improve quality of life.** Smoking cancer patients have a lower quality of life than non-smoking cancer patients. In one study, people treated for head and neck cancer who were former smokers had a significantly higher quality of life compared with patients who had continued smoking.
- **Improve Treatment.** Quitting smoking, even shortly before surgery has been found to reduce surgery complications. In addition, radiation therapy is more effective for former smokers who quit before receiving therapy.

Talking with Your Doctor about Your Tobacco Use

To begin the process of successfully quitting tobacco, talk with your doctor about your tobacco use. Understanding your situation can help the doctor determine the appropriate course of treatment to becoming nicotine free. Also consider talking with your doctor about being referred to a smoking cessation counselor or mental health counselor.

Community Resources

In addition to your doctor, a variety of community resources can aid and support your efforts to stop smoking:

- Smokefree.gov
- The National Cancer Institute's (NCI) toll-free telephone quitline: 800-QUITNOW (800- 784-8669)
- Smoking and Tobacco Use, from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- The American Cancer Society's (ACS) Guide to Quitting Smoking and toll-free telephone quitline from the ACS: 800-ACS-2345 (800-227-2345)
- American Lung Association Freedom from Smoking Online cessation program

Talking to Your Doctor about Alcohol or Illegal Drug Use

In order to plan for the most effective treatment, it is very important that your health care team is aware of your alcohol, tobacco, and drug history. Your health care team may ask you of your alcohol or illegal drugs use. However, if your health care team does not inquire of this information; it beneficial to volunteer such information. You will **not** be denied care if you are honest about your substance history.

Other Resources

- Treatment Facility Locator Toll-free number: 1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)
- Alcoholics Anonymous: www.aa.org
- The National Cancer Institute's Quitline: 1-877-44U-Quit (1-877-448-7848)

This information is provided this information as an educational service.
It is not meant to take the place of medical care or the advice of your doctor.