

Older Smokers

Nearly 13 million Americans aged 50 and older and 4.5 million adults over 65 smoke cigarettes.

Smokers over the age of 65 can benefit from quitting smoking and staying abstinent.

Smoking cessation in older smokers can reduce the risk of myocardial infarction, death from coronary heart disease, and lung cancer.

Abstinence can promote more rapid recovery from illnesses that are exacerbated by smoking and can improve cerebral circulation. Age does not appear to diminish the benefits of quitting smoking.

Smoking cessation interventions that have been effective in the general population have also been effective with older smokers. Research has demonstrated the efficacy of counseling interventions, clinician advice, buddy support programs, age-tailored self-help materials, telephone counseling, and nicotine replacement therapies in treating tobacco use and dependence in adults aged 50 years and older.

The homebound elderly may benefit especially from proactive telephone counseling.

