

## Smoking

Cigarette smoking is a leading cause of death and disability in the United States. It is a major risk factor for heart disease, stroke, lung cancer and other chronic lung diseases like asthma and bronchitis. There are no safe alternatives to cigarettes. Quitting is the best option. Ask your doctor for the treatment (to quit smoking) that is best for you.

Chewing tobacco and cigar smoking can also lead to cancer of the mouth, swelling of the gums and tooth loss.

## Alcohol and Drugs

Misusing alcohol or other drugs is very dangerous to your health, especially after brain and spinal cord injury.

Using alcohol or drugs can lead to another injury or various other problems. Alcohol alters your judgment and interferes with your ability to take care of yourself. It has also been linked to some types of cancers and liver damage. It can affect your blood pressure and heart. Drugs have similar effects. Certain drugs will increase blood pressure, which can cause a heart attack or stroke. All "street drugs" will alter your judgment and interfere with your ability to take care of yourself. Avoid alcohol and misuse of drugs.

### **If drugs and/or alcohol are a problem for you, help is available.**

Please visit: [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)  
Alcoholics Anonymous 1-800-711-6375  
Please visit: [www.na.org](http://www.na.org)  
Narcotics Anonymous 1-800-711-6375

Please talk to your doctor. When you talk to your doctor, the information is private and confidential. There are many services in the community that can also help. In many cases, help is free.