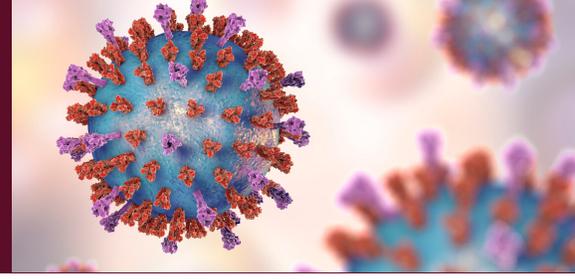


# QUITTING TIME: Tobacco and COVID-19



As the deadly COVID-19 pandemic continues, many are asking what they can do to help keep themselves and their loved ones as safe as possible. The advice from public health officials is clear: **wash your hands** frequently, practice **social distancing**, and if you smoke or vape, **quit now**.

***"Because it attacks the lungs, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 could be an especially serious threat to those who smoke tobacco or marijuana or who vape."*** - Dr. Nora Volkow, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse<sup>1</sup>

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 makes smokers more susceptible to respiratory infections**.<sup>2</sup> This is because:

- **Smoking and vaping inflame lung tissues**<sup>3,4</sup>
- **Smoking and vaping suppress immune system responses necessary to fighting off infections**<sup>5</sup>
- **Marijuana smoke also irritates airways and alters immune responses in ways that can increase risk of infection**<sup>6</sup>

Studies of the epidemic in China found that smoking was associated with the worst cases of COVID-19:

- COVID-19 patients who were **smokers were 2.5 times more likely to be admitted to an ICU, require mechanical ventilation, or die** than non-smokers<sup>7</sup>



As the COVID-19 pandemic progresses, there has never been a better time to **quit smoking or vaping!** Smokers and vapers should contact the California Smokers' Helpline by calling **1-800-NO-BUTTS** or visit [www.nobutts.org/COVID](http://www.nobutts.org/COVID).

For more information on COVID-19, visit the California Department of Public Health: <https://cdph.ca.gov/covid19>

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