

## SMOKING CESSATION

Smoking or being around high levels of secondhand smoke has a direct effect on your heart, lungs and blood vessels. When you light a cigarette and inhale, it is the smoke that carries the nicotine on tar droplets into your lungs where it is then sent to your blood vessels, to your heart, and within 10 seconds to your brain. A chemical that is in the smoke is carbon monoxide. Once it is in your bloodstream, it reduces the amount of oxygen that is available to your heart. At a time when your heart is getting less oxygen the nicotine, which is a stimulant, makes your heart beat faster, increases your blood pressure and causes your arteries to narrow. If you continue to smoke, you are at increased risk for severe health problems such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart attack or stroke. Quitting smoking is one of the single best things you can do for your health. Anyone can quit smoking. It does not matter what age you are, what your health is, or how long you have been smoking. Success depends on your decision to quit smoking.

**Alter your thoughts** – There is no doubt that it is hard to quit a habit that is both addictive and part of a familiar daily routine. People may have to try to quit several times before they quit for good. There are things you can do to help yourself practice living without cigarettes for a while, and things you can learn that will be useful later. Quitting smoking may seem impossible, but it really is not. Don't give up! Half the battle is your thoughts towards quitting. Believe that you will succeed!

**Understand your smoking urges and nicotine withdrawal** – Cravings for cigarettes are often the hardest part in quitting. The urge to smoke is like a wave – it builds up, peaks, and then washes away. This urge will usually go away quickly, whether you have a cigarette or not. Being bored draws your attention to cravings for cigarettes. Try to find something to distract you – take a walk, take some slow deep breaths, watch television, read a book, or talk with a friend.

**Focus on relaxing** – You may be tense, restless, become nervous, or have trouble concentrating when you try to quit smoking. If you focus on relaxing when symptoms appear, you will feel better. Try this: close your eyes and take several slow deep breaths. Concentrate on the air moving in and out of your body. Imagine that you are in a favorite place, or doing something you love to do. Do this for a few minutes. With a little practice you will feel cal afterwards, and the urge to smoke will have passed.

**Find cigarette substitutes** – Your nervous system begins to react to the loss of nicotine within 24 hours of quitting. This reaction peaks at 24 to 48 hours, and then symptoms begin to fade as your body adjusts to the lack of nicotine. Nicotine is gone from your body in 3 to 5 days. During this time, you may feel fidgety because you have nothing to hold in your hand or put in your mouth. If this is a problem for you, get some sugar-free candies, gum, or mints. Hold a straw or toothpick in your fingers or mouth.

**Cut back on caffeine** – After you stop smoking, your body holds on to more caffeine. The extra caffeine in your body may make you feel tense or nervous. Try cutting back on the caffeine at the same time you quit. Coffee, tea, and many brands of soda are available without the caffeine. Try substituting decaffeinated drinks some of the time as you quit smoking.

**Ask your doctor about medications** – If you experience severe nicotine withdrawal symptoms, talk with your nurse or doctor. There are medications that might help relieve the nicotine withdrawal symptoms you may experience as you quit. You will need to discuss the use of the medications with your doctor before you begin to use them.

**How to stay successful – What are some reasons you want to quit?**

Less shortness of breath\_\_\_ Less coughing\_\_\_ Food will taste better\_\_\_

More stamina and energy\_\_\_ Save money\_\_\_ Improved health\_\_\_

**Think back to when you tried to quit in the past – what helped?**

Spouse quit at the same time\_\_\_ Nicotine\_\_\_ Nicotine patch \_\_\_

My friends/family did not smoke around me \_\_\_ Hard candies, gum, mints \_\_\_

Did something to distract myself when I wanted a cigarette \_\_\_

**Make your game plan. Be prepared.**

Knowing what your smoking triggers are ahead of time and having a plan to deal with them will help you stay smoke free. This is a list of some common triggers and suggestions in how to deal with these triggers.

**Smoking Triggers                      Suggested Ways to Cope**

Being around other smokers    Leave the scene or get something in your hand, like a straw

Feeling bored, depressed or lonely    Go for a walk. Talk to a friend. Treat yourself.

Relaxing after a meal or snack            Immediately brush your teeth.

Concern about weight gain    Choose low fat snacks like fresh fruits and vegetables.

These are only a few smoking triggers and ways to cope. Some other common triggers are drinking coffee, feeling angry frustrated or tense, or watching TV. Other ways to cope include working on a hobby, doodle a picture, take a few deep breaths sugarless gum or candy.

**More ways to be prepared:**

Throw away lighters and matches

Throw away old cigarettes

Throw out ashtrays

Ask your family and friends for help and support

**The following resources can help you remain a non-smoker**

**Smoking Quitline of the National Cancer Institute**

Toll Free 1-877-44U-QUIT or 1-877-448-7848

**The American Lung Association**

(205) 933-8821

**Or visit the following web sites:**

**National Cancer Institute** [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov)

**American Lung Association** [www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org)

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