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Smoking - tips on how to quit

Alternative Names

Cigarettes - tips on how to quit; Smoking cessation - tips on how to quit; Smokeless tobacco - tips on how to quit

Information

There are many ways to quit smoking. There are also resources to help you. Family members, friends, and co-workers may be supportive. But to be successful, you must really want to quit.

Most people who have quit smoking were unsuccessful at least once in the past. Try not to view past attempts to quit as failures. See them as learning experiences.

It is hard to stop smoking or using smokeless tobacco. But anyone can do it.

Know the symptoms to expect when you stop. Common symptoms include:

- An intense craving for nicotine
- Anxiety, tension, restlessness, frustration, or impatience
- Difficulty concentrating
- Drowsiness or trouble sleeping
- Headaches
- Increased appetite and weight gain
- Irritability or depression

How bad your symptoms are depends on how long you smoked. How many cigarettes you smoked each day also plays a role.

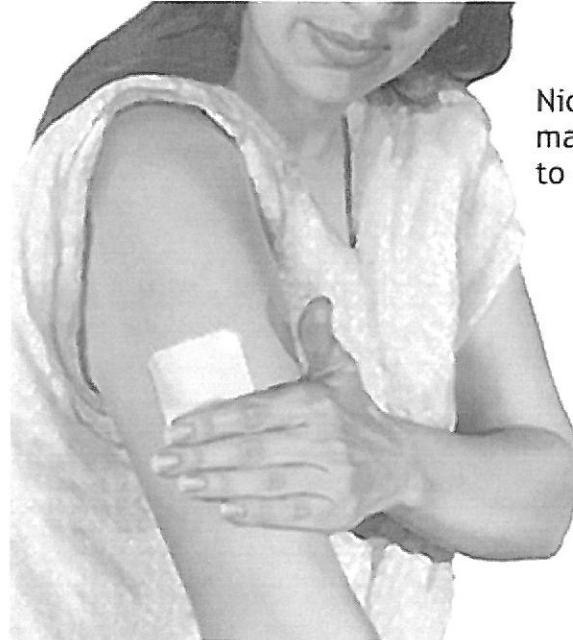
FEEL READY TO QUIT?

First, set a quit date. Quit completely on that day. Before your quit date, you may begin reducing your cigarette use. But remember, there is no safe level of cigarette smoking.

List the reasons why you want to quit. Include both short- and long-term benefits.

Identify the times you are most likely to smoke. For example, do you tend to smoke when feeling stressed or down? When out at night with friends? While drinking coffee or alcohol? When bored? While driving? Right after a meal or sex? During a work break? While watching TV or playing cards? When you are with other smokers?

Let your friends, family, and co-workers know of your plan to stop smoking. Tell them your quit date. It can be helpful if they know what you are going through, especially when you are grumpy.



Nicotine patches may help a person to quit smoking

 ADAM.

Cigarettes and smoking



 ADAM.

Get rid of all your cigarettes just before the quit date. Clean out anything that smells like smoke, such as clothes and furniture.

MAKE A PLAN

Make a plan about what you will do instead of smoking at those times when you are most likely to smoke.

Be as specific as possible. For example, drink tea instead of coffee. Tea may not trigger the desire for a cigarette. Or, take a walk when you feel stressed.

Remove ashtrays and cigarettes from the car. Put pretzels or hard candies there instead. Pretend-smoke with a straw.

Find activities that focus your hands and mind. But make sure they are not taxing or fattening. Computer games, solitaire, knitting, sewing, and crossword puzzles may help.

If you normally smoke after eating, find other ways to end a meal. Play a tape or CD. Eat a piece of fruit. Get up and make a phone call. Take a walk (a good distraction that also burns calories).

CHANGE YOUR LIFESTYLE

Make other changes in your lifestyle. Change your daily schedule and habits. Eat at different times, or eat several small meals instead of three large ones. Sit in a different chair or even a different room.

Satisfy your oral habits in other ways. Eat celery or another low-calorie snack. Chew sugarless gum. Suck on a cinnamon stick.

Go to public places and restaurants where smoking is prohibited or restricted.

Eat regular meals, and don't eat too much candy or sweet things.

Get more exercise. Take walks or ride a bike. Exercise helps relieve the urge to smoke.

SET SOME GOALS

Set short-term quitting goals and reward yourself when you meet them. Every day, put the money you normally spend on cigarettes in a jar. Later, buy something you like.

Try not to think about all the days ahead you will need to avoid smoking. Take it one day at a time.

Even one puff or one cigarette will make your desire for more cigarettes even stronger. However, it is normal to make mistakes. So even if you have one cigarette, you don't need to take the next one.

OTHER TIPS

Enroll in a stop smoking support program. Hospitals, health departments, community centers, and work sites often offer programs. Learn about self-hypnosis or other techniques.

Ask your health care provider about medications that can help you quit nicotine and tobacco and keep you from starting again.

Find out about nicotine patches, gum, and sprays.

The American Cancer Society's web site, www.cancer.org, is an excellent resource for smokers who are trying to quit. The Great American Smokeout can also help some smokers kick the habit.

Above all, don't get discouraged if you aren't able to quit smoking the first time. Nicotine addiction is a hard habit to break. Try something different next time. Develop new strategies, and try again. Many people take several attempts to finally kick the habit.

References