

TOBACCO: TIPS TO HELP YOU QUIT

OK, so you have made the decision to quit tobacco. Congratulations! You have taken the most important step on the road to being an ex-smoker. But let's face it: if it were easy to quit smoking, we would have a whole lot of tobacco companies out of business. The more cigarettes you smoke, and the more years you have been a smoker, the harder it is to quit. Nicotine, whether in cigarettes or chewing tobacco, is highly addictive. But millions of Americans have quit, and you can, too. Like anything else in life, if you are going to be successful, it pays to prepare.



COMMIT TO QUIT

- ○ **Learn about the health effects of tobacco use and the benefits of quitting.** Facing the facts can help you stay motivated. When cravings call, you can envision how happy your lungs will be when you wake up to a nice, deep breath, get fewer colds, and have more stamina during physical activity.
- ○ **Talk to someone who has quit successfully.** Hearing other people's stories can inspire you and help you know what to expect.
- ○ **Make a list:** Make a pros and cons list of why **you** want to quit tobacco (cancer, heart disease, cost, spouse wants you to quit, smelly clothes, whatever) and what you will be giving up when you quit (best friends all smoke, keeps my weight down, keeps me awake while I study, etc.). Consider the pros and cons of all the angles, such as long- and short-term health, how others view you, effects on loved ones, money (today's cigarette packs and tomorrow's cancer treatment), self-esteem, and anything else important to you. Take a single sheet of paper and draw a line down the middle. Write down your pros and cons and be honest with yourself, because you have to believe that your "pros of quitting" outweigh your "cons" or you will never succeed. Then fold up the list and put it in your wallet. You can refer to it during times of weakness in the future.

PREPARE FOR YOUR QUIT DATE

- ○ **Set a quit date:** This is very important. Decide the exact day you will quit and circle it on your calendar. Choose a day that is not particularly stressful. It is nice if it is already a special day to you (your birthday, Mother's Day, Flag Day, your cat's birthday, etc.), but that is not required. We certainly don't recommend that you wait six months for that "perfect day." Any day is a perfect day to quit.
- ○ **Tell everybody:** The more people you tell, the more support you will get and the harder it will be to fail (you don't want to disappoint them, do you?).
- ○ **Nobody smokes in your house or car:** Make a new rule with no exceptions. If you spouse/partner/roommate smoke, they need to take it

outside. Be nice but firm. You want to succeed and, if they love you, they want you to succeed, too, even if they are also smokers.

- ○ **Get support:** There are lots of individuals and groups out there who want to help you quit smoking. Here are a couple to consider:

- EUSHS Alcohol and Other Drug counselors have experience in helping smokers develop strategies to quit and stay quit. They can provide consultation, referral and support in a private, confidential, one-on one setting. Consultations can be scheduled by contacting EUSHS at 404-727-7551 or by utilizing the MedBuddy-U appointment request system.



- Unite Georgia is a free telephone counseling, support and referral services (paid for by state tobacco lawsuit settlement money!) at 1-877-270-STOP.
- The American Lung Association offers an online smoking cessation program called Freedom from Smoking

that is free of charge. The program information can be accessed through the association's web site www.lungusa.org

- Emory Faculty and Staff Assistance Program offers a "Freedom from Smoking" class (7 weeks, 8 sessions), open to all Emory faculty, staff, students, family and friends. Enrollment is only \$40.00. Call 404-727-WELL for more information.

NICOTINE REPLACEMENT AND MEDICATIONS

- ○ **Are you addicted to nicotine?** Some people need nicotine replacement (gum, nasal spray, patch or inhaler) or bupropion SR (Zyban®) or varenicline (Chantix™) to quit. If you are physically dependent/addicted to nicotine, medical help can make all the difference. How do you know if you are addicted? Healthcare providers use the following three clues. You might need some help to succeed if:

- You smoke a pack of cigarettes a day or more, or
- You have your first cigarette within 30 minutes of awakening each morning, or
- You have tried to quit in the past and

failed due to
physical withdrawal.

- ○ **Nicotine replacement** can be a very effective tool to help smokers quit. The nicotine can be used to wean you slowly off this addicting drug without continuing the actual smoking habit. You need to follow the directions carefully and remember that you **cannot** (let us say that again . . . **cannot**) smoke while using nicotine replacement or you could have a serious heart complication from the excessive nicotine stimulation.
- ○ **Bupropion SR (Zyban®)** is the same prescription drug used to treat depression under the trade name Wellbutrin®. Bupropion reduces the craving for nicotine in many people, because it acts on the same part of the brain involved in nicotine cravings. Your healthcare provider will have you start bupropion one week before your quit date and continue it for several weeks (usually 7 to 12 weeks) after. Bupropion can also be combined with nicotine replacement for a “one-two punch” against tobacco withdrawal. Call 404-727-7551 or request an appointment through MedBuddy-U, and we will help you get started properly.
- ○ **Varenicline tartrate (Chantix™)** is the second prescription medication approved to assist smokers in quitting. It boasts a dual action, both helping to reduce withdrawal symptoms (cravings) and decreasing the pleasure of smoking. Your healthcare provider will have you start varenicline one week before your quit date and continue it for several weeks (usually 12 weeks) thereafter.



START YOUR NEW LIFE

- ○ **“Detoxify” your life:** When you wake up on the morning of your quit day, you need to find a tobacco-free life ahead of you. Remove all cigarettes (do **not** hide some in a drawer in case you fail!), break all the ashtrays (even the one you inherited from your grandmother), throw away the lighters, etc. You don’t need them any more.
- ○ **Make the break:** Studies show that it does **not** work to taper off cigarettes gradually, and don’t believe anyone who says otherwise. When you reach your quit date, you **cannot** smoke, not even one puff.
- ○ **Substitute healthy activities:** You have given up smoking, an unhealthy activity, so now what do you do with your time? Why not substitute a healthy activity? For example, if you smoke each day after meals, take a brisk walk around the house/building/quad instead. Meditate. Read a chapter of a good book. If you need something to help your “oral fixation,” chew sugarless gum, nibble on cut raw vegetables, or chew toothpicks.

- ○ **Change your routine:** Every smoker associates cigarettes with specific times, activities and people. If you are going to become a successful ex-smoker, you are going to have to shake things up, at least temporarily. For example, don't go to places where smoking is an important part of the activity for you, like bars, clubs, and parties. Once you are free and clear, and you feel you can be around smokers (including smoking friends/loved ones) without relapsing, you can go back. But don't set yourself up for failure.
- ○ **Spend some money on yourself:** Hey, you are saving \$2-3 on each pack of cigarettes you **don't** smoke. So spend some of that money and buy yourself something nice. You earned it.
- ○ **Celebrate your quit day anniversary:** For the rest of your life, your quit date is a special day. Celebrate it and share it with friends/family.

DEALING WITH RELAPSE

- ○ **For many people, quitting is a process, not an event.** So you're not perfect. Quitting isn't easy, and most people make several attempts to quit before they are successful. Relapse is not failure; it just means that quitting requires a strong, long-term commitment, even in the face of setbacks.
- ○ **Remind yourself of the advantages of quitting,** and try again when you are ready. If you find that you feel bad about yourself for relapsing, try to focus on the advantages of quitting, rather than the disadvantages of continuing to smoke. For example, it seems to help people stay motivated when they focus on how good it will feel to take deep, clean breaths, rather than dwelling on how much gunk accumulates in a smoker's lungs.
- ○ **Learn from the past and rehearse for the future.** Learn something each time you try to quit, including what helped you and what hurt your efforts. Review what went right and what went wrong, and rehearse for your moments of weakness. What was your biggest temptation? Was it physical craving, social cues, stress, rituals associated with smoking, or something else? What are you going to do next time when you really want a cigarette, when you have a loved one sick in the hospital, when you get a bad grade or break up with your boy/girlfriend? Bad stuff happens, and starting smoking again takes a really bad thing and makes it **two** really bad things. So decide what you will do/say/think in that moment of weakness and remember it. Nobody ever goes on stage without a rehearsal, and you are about to have a really important performance.

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Helpful Links:



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Office of Smoking and Health web site at

www.cdc.gov/tobacco/factsheets/cessation_factsheet.htm

The June 2000 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services consumer guide
“You Can Quit Smoking” at www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit/smconsumr.pdf

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