

The Wellness News

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The Smoking Cessation: Getting Ready to Quit

Thinking about quitting? Fantastic! There are few things that are as beneficial to your overall health and wellbeing as quitting smoking. Sometimes it can seem intimidating, even overwhelming, to make such a huge lifestyle change. However, with proper preparation and motivation, making the transition to being tobacco free can turn into a successful and rewarding process.

Why Quit?

Everyone has different reasons that motivate them to quit. It is important to determine what personally motivates you. Try writing down the reasons you want to quit and keeping them somewhere you will see them everyday. Here are some common reasons:

Health: In the U.S. smoking is responsible for nearly 1 in 5 deaths, not to mention the people suffering everyday from tobacco related disease. Quitting smoking dramatically decreases your risk for all types of cancers, lung diseases, and cardiovascular diseases. Quitting can also lengthen your life: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that male smokers lose an average of 13.2 years of life and female smokers lose 14.5.

Family: Family members, specifically children and grandchildren, can often motivate individuals to quit smoking.

Family related motivators include cutting back on second-hand smoke for the household, setting a good example for others, increasing overall health of the family, and making family members proud.

Cost: Smoking a pack of cigarettes each day can cost around \$300 each month. Think about other ways you could use that money instead of on cigarettes.

Better Quality of Life: Many people see vast improvements in the quality of their life upon quitting. This can include:

- More energy and focus
- Better sense of smell and taste
- Whiter teeth, fresh breath, and better dental health
- Able to breathe easier and cough less
- Less premature wrinkling, better skin overall
- Clothes and skin no longer smell of smoke

Freedom: After quitting, you will no longer have to worry about when or where you will smoke your next cigarette. Think of the new activities or hobbies you can participate in rather than smoking.

After just 20 minutes of being quit, your heart rate and blood pressure drop. After 8 hours, Carbon monoxide and oxygen levels return to normal. After 24 hours, the chance of heart attack decreases.

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Preparing to Quit

Quitting is not just about the physiological addiction. There is also the psychological addiction, comprised of all the emotions, habits, and routines built around and involving smoking. In order to be best prepared to quit, it is important to address both areas and plan for each of them.

Physiological: Physical addiction to tobacco can cause a variety of withdrawal symptoms. These include:

- Dizziness
- Feelings of frustration and irritability
- Anxiety or restlessness
- Trouble concentrating
- Headaches
- Sleep disturbances or exhaustion

For many people, physical withdrawal is unbearable, leading to a smoking relapse. Luckily, there are choices for reducing withdrawal symptoms. Nicotine replacement therapy (NRTs) comes in 5 different varieties: gum, patches, lozenges, nasal spray, and inhalers.

Prescription drugs are another alternative, Chantix and Zyban both being popular options. Speak with your doctor about what would work best for you.

Psychological: It is important to identify what sort of triggers cause you to want to smoke. Once identified, you can come up with alternative behaviors for dealing with or reacting to the triggers. It can be helpful to ask for outside help from friends, family, and smoking cessation counselors

Emotions: Certain emotions can trigger an urge to smoke and those emotions can vary from person to person. For some it may be stress, while for others it can be boredom.

Habits and Routines: From smoking first thing in the morning with a cup of coffee, to smoking right after work on the drive home, every smoker has several smoking routines built into their day or lifestyle. Come up with new routines and habits to replace the ones involving smoking.

Quitting

Now that you know why you want to quit and what it takes to quit, create your quit plan!

Quit Day: Pick a quit day a few weeks from today and mark it on your calendar. Pick a day that is significant to you in some way.

Get Support: Talk to your doctor about NRTs and prescription medication options. Look into smoking cessation counseling through government assisted programs or your workplace. Tell your friends, co-workers, and family about your quit day. Research support groups and helpful websites.

No More Tobacco: Get rid of all cigarettes, tobacco, lighters, and other related paraphernalia. Replace it with hard candy, gum, and crunchy vegetables for when a craving hits.

Reflect: Quitting smoking is tough, but you can do it! Throughout the process of quitting, it is important to be prepared and stay motivated. Remember all of the reasons you want to quit. Keep your motivators written down and posted where you can see them everyday. Think about what challenges might come up as you quit and brainstorm solutions ahead of time. For further support and information, speak with your health coach.



Call Your Health Coach for More Information 1-800-433-2320