

Quit Smoking!

You already know *why* you need to quit. So here is what the experts have to say about quitting.

1. Set a Date to Quit Smoking If you want to quit smoking, it helps to set a quit date. Setting a date to quit gets you thinking about the steps you will need to take. Mark the quit date on your calendar. Begin to focus on that date. It will be a big change in your life. Try to make it a time of when you are likely to be under less stress!

2. Remove Smoking Triggers A smoking trigger is anything your brain has connected with smoking. Everyone's smoking triggers are different. Your smoking trigger may be the smell of cigarette smoke, your morning coffee, looking at an ashtray. Begin by removing all tobacco and 'smoking supplies' from your home, porch, and car. Everything that might remind you of smoking should be gone!

3. You will Not Feel Good When you first quit smoking, it will be rough. You might feel fatigued, irritable or even angry. But according to the American Lung Association, nicotine clears out of the system quickly. It is usually in the undetectable range within 24 hours after someone quits. Almost everyone puts on weight. You are likely to feel anxious and hungry, but that should improve after a week or so. Raw vegetables or other low calorie snacks may help. Sugarless gum or candy should be available. Keep some of these in your car as well as in your pocket or purse, not just around the house. Remember, that a few extra pounds are not nearly as harmful as the nicotine. And you can address the weight loss once you are free of the tobacco addiction.

4. Consider Nicotine Replacement These are nicotine substitutes that may require a prescription. They may help reduce nicotine cravings. These include nicotine gum, patches, inhalers, and lozenges. Studies show that those who use stop smoking aids may have up to 50% better chance of quitting than those who do not use them. Talk to your health care provider about the options available to you.

5. Ask about Drugs Approved by the FDA for Helping Smokers Quit There are two types available. One is the antidepressant, Zyban® (Bupropion). It may help people quit smoking by reducing nicotine cravings. It may also curb your appetite. Another prescription medication is CHANTIX® (varenicline). It changes the way your body uses nicotine and blocks the pleasant effects nicotine has on the brain. The use of either of these may have serious consequences. They have a "black box" warning on the label. This is the most serious type of warning in prescription drug labeling. The warning includes reports on symptoms such as changes in behavior, hostility, agitation, depressed mood, and suicidal thoughts while taking either of these medications to stop smoking.

6. You Crave Cigarettes because you are Addicted If you have tried to quit and failed, you might feel guilty. Don't. You are addicted to a very powerful substance. Nicotine addiction is as powerful as addiction to heroin or cocaine. If you smoke a cigarette, do not focus on your failure. Celebrate the ones you did not smoke! If you have failed, it only means that you need to try again.

7. Quitting Cigarettes for Good Can you quit cigarettes for good? Most who quit smoking have to try several times. But each time you try to quit, you have a greater chance of success. Most of the people who have the persistence to keep trying to quit, will succeed. Don't give up!