

GUIDE FOR PATIENTS

How to stop smoking

Quitting smoking isn't easy, but millions of people have done it and so can you. These tips will help.

Getting ready to quit

- Set a date for quitting. Try to convince a friend to quit with you, so you'll have mutual support.
- Notice when, where, and how you smoke. List the times when you usually light up—with morning coffee, after a meal, while driving, or whatever your usual smoking occasions are.
- Change your smoking routines. Keep your cigarettes in a different place, don't hold your cigarette in the hand you're used to using, switch brands, and don't carry on any other activity—like reading, driving, talking on the phone, or watching TV—while you smoke.
- Designate one place to smoke—like the back porch—and don't smoke anywhere else.
- When you want a cigarette, wait a few minutes before you light up. Try doing something else, like chewing gum or drinking a glass of water, and see if the urge passes.
- Buy only one pack of cigarettes at a time.
- Ask your doctor about medications that ease withdrawal symptoms and reduce cigarette cravings. You may want to have nicotine patches or gum on hand, ready for quit day.

On quitting day

- Get rid of all your cigarettes and put away your ashtrays.
- Change your morning routines, especially where and when you eat breakfast. Try sitting somewhere else, or going out to eat.

- When you get the urge to smoke, do something else instead.
- Carry substitutes to put in your mouth, such as chewing gum, hard candy, or toothpicks.
- Reward yourself at the end of the day. See a movie, or eat a favorite treat.

Staying smoke-free

- Don't be upset if you feel sleepy or short-tempered. These are symptoms of nicotine withdrawal, and they will go away in a few days.
- Exercise regularly. Go for walks, ride a bike, or take part in sports you enjoy.
- Think about the positive aspects of not smoking: your self-image as someone who's kicked the habit, the health benefits you and your family get from living in a smoke-free environment, the example you set for others.
- When you feel tense, think about the problem that's creating those feelings and try to solve it. Tell yourself that smoking won't make it better.
- Eat regular meals, so you don't have times when you feel hungry and confuse that feeling with the desire to smoke.
- Put the money you would have spent on cigarettes in a money jar every day, and watch it mount up. Plan to buy something special for yourself.
- Let other people know you have stopped smoking. Your friends who still smoke may want to know how you did it.
- If you break down and smoke a cigarette, don't give up. Many former smokers made several attempts to stop before they succeeded. Quit again.