



KAISER PERMANENTE®

Developing a Plan for Quitting Smoking

If you're choosing to stop smoking, congratulations! By quitting smoking, you should feel better and reduce your chances of developing many kinds of illness, such as asthma, bronchitis, ulcers, cancer, and heart disease.

Here are six steps to take to help you quit:

- 1.) Pick a specific day that you will stop smoking: today, tomorrow, or perhaps Monday morning.
- 2.) Tell everyone at home and work that you're quitting. This will help you keep your commitment.
- 3.) Quit "cold turkey." It's usually harder to quit by tapering off. When you stop smoking, your body goes into withdrawal. The worst of this state lasts a few days after your last cigarette, although you may experience some physical withdrawal symptoms from one to three weeks. After that, the symptoms are all psychological. So if you quit cold turkey, the physical withdrawal period will be over sooner.
- 4.) Plan to be very busy during the first few days that you stop smoking. Get involved in activities that discourage smoking and keep your hands and body occupied: Participate in sports; start a vigorous walking program; go shopping; do auto repair, woodwork, needlework, or other hobbies. At the same time, avoid activities that you associate with smoking, such as sitting around chatting after meals, or going to parties where others are smoking.
- 5.) Reward yourself for not going back to smoking. Put your cigarette money in a jar where you can see how expensive smoking really is. Then spend this money on yourself as a reward for not smoking. Also, celebrate milestones. After a week, go out to dinner. After a month, take a vacation day to go sightseeing.
- 6.) If you slip up and start smoking again, remember that it often takes several tries to quit smoking. Forgive yourself and try again.

If you find that you still crave cigarettes, here are three ways to deal with that craving:

- 1.) Substitute another activity for smoking. Chew sugarless gum, eat a low-calorie snack, or sip water, tea, or plain soda. Exercising to the point of breathing heavily is very effective at blocking the craving to smoke. Of course, you should check with your health care professional for an exercise plan that is safe for you.
- 2.) Relax to deal with the anxiety you feel when you want to smoke. Sit or lie comfortably and

close your eyes. Concentrate on the signs of your anxiety, such as tight muscles or shaky hands. Notice that as you relax, these sensations go away.

3.) Visualize fears that made you want to quit smoking, or visualize positive situations that show what you gain from quitting. You'll find that visualizing the negative results of smoking or the positive results of quitting will help you overcome your craving for a smoke.

If you want more help in quitting, contact the Health Education Department at your local Kaiser Permanente facility. You can find out about smoking cessation classes and other resources offered through Kaiser Permanente or in the community. You can also learn about nicotine replacement therapy and whether it's appropriate for you.



For additional health information you can trust:

- Log on to our members-only Web site at www.kaiserpermanente.org/california, then click the "Kaiser Permanente Members Only" button
- Visit your local Kaiser Permanente Health Education Center
- Check your Kaiser Permanente Healthwise Handbook
- Listen to the Kaiser Permanente Healthphone messages at 1-800-33 ASK ME (1-800-332-7563)

To get your free Handbook and Healthphone Directory, call 1-800-464-4000.

The information presented here is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of professional medical care. If you have persistent health problems or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor or other health care professional.

© 1998, The Permanente Medical Group, Inc.

REGIONAL HEALTH EDUCATION