



Smoke Signals

Vol. 10/Sept. 16, 2005

Remember the Date: Nov. 17, 2005

Quitting Smoking: Tips for the First Week

Nicotine is a powerful addiction. If you have tried to quit, you know how hard it can be. People who are trying to quit smoking go through both physical and psychological withdrawal. Here are some tips for surviving the first week.

Cravings

Drink a lot of liquids, especially water. Try herbal teas or fruit juices. Limit coffee, soft drinks, or alcohol—they can increase your urge to smoke.

Avoid sugar and fatty food. Try low-calorie foods for snacking—carrots and other vegetables, sugarless gum, air-popped popcorn, or low-fat cottage cheese. Don't skip meals.

Exercise regularly and moderately. Regular exercise helps. Joining an exercise group provides a healthy activity and a new routine.

Get more sleep. Try to go to sleep earlier and get more rest.

Take deep breaths. Distract yourself. When cravings hit, do something else immediately, such as talking to someone, getting busy with a task, or taking deep breaths.

Change your habits. Use a different route to work, eat breakfast in a different place, or get up from the table right away after eating.

Do something to reduce your stress. Take a hot bath or shower, read a book, or exercise.

Psychological Needs

Remind yourself everyday why you are quitting.

Avoid places you connect with smoking.

Develop a plan for relieving stress.

Listen to relaxing music.

Watch a funny movie.

Rely on your friends, family and support group for help.

Avoid alcohol. It lowers your chances for success.

Smoking Among Older Adults

Older smokers are at greater risks from smoking because they have smoked longer (an average of 40 years), tend to be heavier smokers, and are more likely to suffer from smoking-related illnesses. They are also significantly less likely than younger smokers to believe that smoking harms their health.

- Today's generation of older Americans had smoking rates among the highest of any U.S. generation. In the mid-1960s, about 54 percent of adult males and another 21 percent were former smokers; over 34 percent of adult females were smokers and another 8 percent were former smokers.
- Men 65 or older who smoke are twice as likely to die from a stroke, and women smokers are about one and a half times as likely to die from a stroke than their nonsmoking counterparts. The risk of dying from a heart attack is 60 percent higher for smokers than nonsmokers 65 or older.
- Cigarette smokers are more than twice as likely as nonsmokers to develop dementia of any kind and Alzheimer's disease. Smokers also have two to three times the risk of developing cataracts, the leading cause of blindness and visual loss, as nonsmokers.
- Smoking lessens one's normal life expectancy by an average of 13 to 15 years — thereby eliminating retirement years for most smokers.
- Quitting smoking has proven health benefits, even at a late age. When an older person quits smoking, circulation improves immediately, and the lungs begin to repair damage. In one year, the added risk of heart disease is cut almost in half, and risk of stroke, lung disease, and cancer diminish. Among smokers who quit at age 65, men gained 1.4 to 2.0 years of life and women gained 2.7 to 3.4 years.

Ready to stop smoking?
Call 894-2408 for more tips to
help you quit!