



# Smoke Signals

**Remember the Date: Nov. 17, 2005**

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## ***Kicking the Habit***

If you are one of those who plan to kick your smoking habit before St. Luke's goes smoke free on Nov. 17, you should know that there are quite a few cessation methods to choose from, each with pros and cons, some more effective than others, to help you make the transition from 'smoker' to 'non-smoker.' From cold turkey to alternative medicine, see which method might work for you.

**Cold Turkey** - Just do it. Works best with motivation and preparation.

**Pros:** Immediately free from smoke and nicotine, no cost, saves money, provides health benefits, you smell better, immediate sense of accomplishment.

**Cons:** Withdrawal symptoms. Problems arise without planning and preparation before taking the plunge.

**Nicotine Patch** - Simply sticks to your skin and can help you reduce withdrawal symptoms. Available by prescription or over the counter at local pharmacies and grocery stores.

**Pros:** Easy to use. Gives you time to adjust to a smoke-free lifestyle by getting off nicotine slowly. No tar, carbon monoxide or other carcinogens.

**Cons:** Possible side effects. Can be addictive. Patches are not a magic fix because you're still using nicotine. Can be costly and you may have to wait for insurance approval.

**Nicotine Gum** - Chew it up and park it between the gum and cheek. Can help reduce withdrawal symptoms. Available over the counter at pharmacies and grocery stores.

**Pros:** Follows a schedule but can be used if cravings occur. Satisfies the oral habit. Allows time to adjust to a smoke-free lifestyle. No tar, carbon monoxide or carcinogens.

**Cons:** Possible side effects. Requires attention to schedule. Requires an effort to use.

**Nicotine Inhaler or Nasal Spray** - Inhaled into the mouth or sprayed into the nose. Can help reduce withdrawal symptoms. Available by doctors prescription.

**Pros:** Follows a schedule but can be used if cravings occur outside of schedule. Inhaler satisfies hand-to-mouth habit.

**Cons:** Possible side effects. Requires attention to schedule and effort to use.

**Medications (Zyban, Wellbutrin)** - By doctor's prescription, can help reduce withdrawal symptoms.

**Pros:** Helps with mood. No tar or carbon monoxide, nicotine or carcinogens.

**Cons:** Possible side effects. Start using up to two weeks before quitting. Must be taken every day.

**Cutting Down** - Gradually reduce the number of cigarettes smoked or change brand for lower nicotine levels. Requires determination and inner drive.

**Pros:** Gradual adjustment to non-smoker status. Get experience and confidence controlling smoking.

**Cons:** Emotional attachment to last few cigarettes. Not nicotine free. Hard to maintain a low number of cigarettes.

**Buddy System** - Working together with a friend or relative who also wants to quit.

**Pros:** Shared problem solving and someone to rely on.

**Cons:** Difficult to find someone to buddy with.

**Hypnosis** - Reach a deep state of relaxation and openness to suggestion, changing the way you think about cigarettes.

Licensed hypnotherapists can be found in the phone book.

**Pros:** Relaxing and soothing. Can use in combination with other quitting methods.

**Cons:** No formal education on smoking or quitting. Cost involved. Return visits.

**FreshStart  
Smoking Cessation Classes  
for St. Luke's  
employees and volunteers**

**FREE**

**7 p.m. Tuesdays  
Aug. 23, Aug. 30,  
Sept. 6 and Sept. 13  
in the boardroom  
call 894-2408 to register**