Smoking, You Can Quit

If you are ready to quit smoking, or are thinking about it, congratulations! You have chosen to help yourself be healthier and live longer!

Cigarettes bring nicotine, tar, carbon monoxide and other irritants into your body. Nicotine is the chemical in cigarette smoke that addicts you. Your lungs, heart and blood vessels will be able to work better without these poisons. There are lots of different ways to quit smoking. Nicotine gum, nicotine patches, a nicotine inhaler, or nicotine nasal spray help with physical craving. Hypnosis, support groups, and medicines help break the habit of smoking.

HELPFUL TIPS TO GET AND STAY OFF CIGARETTES

- Learn to predict your moods. Do not let a bad situation be your excuse to have a cigarette. Some situations in your life might tempt you into wanting a cigarette.
- Ask friends and co-workers not to smoke around you.
- Make your home a "smoke-free zone."
- Never have 'just one' cigarette. It leads to wanting another and another. Remind yourself of your decision to quit.
- On a card, make a list of your reasons for not smoking. Read it at least the same number of times a day as you have a cigarette. Tell yourself everyday, "I do not want to smoke. I choose not to smoke."
- Ask someone at home or work to help you with your plan to quit smoking.
- Have something planned to do right after eating or having a cup of coffee. Take a walk or get other exercise to perk you up. This will help to keep you from overeating.
- Try a relaxation exercise to calm you down and decrease your stress. Remember, you may be tense and nervous the first two weeks after you quit, but this will pass.
- Find new activities to keep your hands busy. Play with a pen, coin or rubber band. Doodle or draw things on paper.
- Brush your teeth right after eating. This will help cut down the craving for the taste of tobacco after meals. You can try mouthwash, too.
- Try gum, breath mints, or diet candy to keep something in your mouth.

IF YOU ARE STILL SMOKING, AND ARE THINKING ABOUT OR TRYING TO QUIT

- Do not stock up on cigarettes. Never buy a carton. Wait until one pack is finished before you buy another.
- Never carry cigarettes with you at work or at home.
- Keep cigarettes as far from you as possible. Leave them with someone else.
- Never carry matches or a lighter with you.
- Always ask yourself, "Do I need this cigarette, or is this just a reflex?"
- Bet with someone that you can quit. Put cigarette money in a piggy bank every morning. If you smoke, you give up the money. If you do not smoke, by the end of the week, you keep the money.
- Keep trying. It takes 21 days to change a habit!
- Talk to your caregiver about maybe using one of the 7 medicines available to help you quit. These include nicotine replacement gum, lozenges, or skin patches.

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