

## Five Keys for Quitting Smoking

Studies have shown that these five steps will help you quit and quit for good. You have the best chances of quitting if you use them together.

### 1. Get Ready

- Set a quit date.
- Change your environment.
  1. Get rid of ALL cigarettes and ashtrays in your home, car, and place of work.
  2. Don't let people smoke in your home.
- Review your past attempts to quit. Think about what worked and what did not.
- Once you quit, don't smoke—NOT EVEN A PUFF!

### 2. Get Support and Encouragement

Studies have shown that you have a better chance of being successful if you have help. You can get support in many ways:

- Tell your family, friends, and co-workers that you are going to quit and want their support. Ask them not to smoke around you or leave cigarettes out.
- Talk to your health care provider (for example, doctor, dentist, nurse, pharmacist, psychologist, or smoking counselor).
- Get individual, group, or telephone counseling. The more counseling you have, the better your chances are of quitting. Programs are given at local hospitals and health centers. Call your local health department for information about programs in your area.

### 3. Learn New Skills and Behaviors

- Try to distract yourself from urges to smoke. Talk to someone, go for a walk, or get busy with a task.
- When you first try to quit, change your routine. Use a different route to work. Drink tea instead of coffee. Eat breakfast in a different place.
- Do something to reduce your stress. Take a hot bath, exercise, or read a book.
- Plan something enjoyable to do every day.
- Drink a lot of water and other fluids.

### 4. Get Medication and Use It Correctly

Medications can help you stop smoking and lessen the urge to smoke.

- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved five medications to help you quit smoking:
  1. Bupropion SR—Available by prescription.
  2. Nicotine gum—Available over-the-counter.
  3. Nicotine inhaler—Available by prescription.
  4. Nicotine nasal spray—Available by prescription.
  5. Nicotine patch—Available by prescription and over-the-counter.
- Ask your health care provider for advice and carefully read the information on the package.
- All of these medications will more or less double your chances of quitting and quitting for good.
- Everyone who is trying to quit may benefit from using a medication. If you are pregnant or trying to become pregnant, nursing, under age 18, smoking fewer than 10 cigarettes per day, or have a medical condition, talk to your doctor or other health care provider before taking medications.

### 5. Be Prepared for Relapse or Difficult Situations

Most relapses occur within the first 3 months after quitting. Don't be discouraged if you start smoking again. Remember, most people try several times before they finally quit. Here are some difficult situations to watch for:

- **Alcohol.** Avoid drinking alcohol. Drinking lowers your chances of success.
- **Other Smokers.** Being around smoking can make you want to smoke.
- **Weight Gain.** Many smokers will gain weight when they quit, usually less than 10 pounds. Eat a healthy diet and stay active. Don't let weight gain distract you from your main goal—quitting smoking. Some quit-smoking medications may help delay weight gain.
- **Bad Mood or Depression.** There are a lot of ways to improve your mood other than smoking.

If you are having problems with any of these situations, talk to your doctor or other health care provider.

## Questions to Think About

*Think about the following questions before you try to stop smoking. You may want to talk about your answers with your health care provider.*

1. Why do you want to quit?
2. When you tried to quit in the past, what helped and what didn't?
3. What will be the most difficult situations for you after you quit? How will you plan to handle them?
4. Who can help you through the tough times? Your family? Friends? Health care provider?
5. What pleasures do you get from smoking? What ways can you still get pleasure if you quit?

*Here are some questions to ask your health care provider.*

1. How can you help me to be successful at quitting?
2. What medication do you think would be best for me and how should I take it?
3. What should I do if I need more help?
4. What is smoking withdrawal like? How can I get information on withdrawal?

## Additional Motivation:

### When Smokers Quit—The Health Benefits Over Time

- **20 minutes after quitting:** Your blood pressure drops to a level close to that before the last cigarette. The temperature of your hands and feet increases to normal.
- **8 hours after quitting:** The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.
- **24 hours after quitting:** Your chance of a heart attack decreases.
- **2 weeks to 3 months after quitting:** Your circulation improves and your lung function increases up to 30%.
- **1 to 9 months after quitting:** Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, and shortness of breath decrease; cilia (tiny hair like structures that move mucus out of the lungs) regain normal function in the lungs, increasing the ability to handle mucus, clean the lungs, and reduce infection.
- **1 year after quitting:** The excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's.
- **5 years after quitting:** Your stroke risk is reduced to that of a nonsmoker 5-15 years after quitting.
- **10 years after quitting:** The lung cancer death rate is about half that of a continuing smoker's. The risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney, and pancreas decrease.
- **15 years after quitting:** The risk of coronary heart disease is that of a nonsmoker's.

