

Smoking Cessation:

If cigarettes are one of your main vices and the fact that you can't do without them is making you crazy, don't give up hope yet! The average successful quitter has tried to kick the habit 6 times, I have personally had success with folks who have tried over 20 times! There is no reason to give up hope--all it takes is a strong enough desire with the right resources to help you quit.

Part of what makes any substance addicting is the speed with which it has its effect in the body. If you have an effect within seconds from one route of taking a drug, and the other route takes minutes before effects are felt, the route that gives effects in seconds will be the most addicting route of administration. This is the reason why smoking crack is much more addictive than snorting cocaine into the nose\; the nasal route requires the drug to pass from the veins to the heart, then lungs, back to the heart, into the arteries and finally to the brain. Smoking brings a drug from the lungs to the heart to the brain. Instant gratification. Smoking tobacco acts just as quickly in the brain. If a subject is given steady unchanging levels of a drug, the effect on the mind is not so great, therefore the drug can be less addicting. Cancer patients can take sustained release morphine preparations with very little high compared to junkies with needles in their veins.

Medical Help;

The nicotine patch works very well in providing sustained prolonged nicotine levels that help wean patients off of that poison. Nicotine chewing gum works almost as well, but it still has "peaks and troughs" in blood levels. The important reminder with either method is that smoking produces very rapid increases in the drug's concentration in the brain. This works against your ability to quit the habit. A slow gradual wean over a long time is the easiest way for many folks to give up this harmful habit. Cigarettes contain over 200 poisons per cigarette. The patch is a purified version with just one poison. It's probably healthier to use concentrated nicotine than to get all the other poisons. Many folks are concerned about the expense of a course of nicotine patch therapy. There are a variety of strengths available, from 7 mg patches to 22 mg patches. The stronger patches are used for the people who smoke the most cigarettes. Somebody who is smoking less than a pack a day can probably start with the weakest patch for a few weeks and then stop cold. Heavy smokers will need to spend more time with the stronger patches and wean more slowly. Your doctor can help you with this if necessary, but don't take up his or her time unless you really want to stop!

Clonidine is a blood-pressure medicine that has historically helped some people quit, but there are better agents available now.

Bupropione also known as Wellbutrin or Zyban works in the brain to stimulate dopamine release. Dopamine is one of the neurotransmitters in the brain, more specifically it's the "feel good" neurotransmitter. Cigarettes trigger release of dopamine. So does this antidepressant medication.

Varenicline or Chantix is the newest smoking cessation aid available. It works directly on the nicotine receptors in the brain to also help smokers stop. With both of the above drugs, the smoker is encouraged to continue smoking initially while taking the medication. When cravings diminish due to the medication, it's easier to stop.

What about the "Blimp Effect"? Nobody wants "Goodyear" painted on their side by Superbowl Sunday! If you decide to substitute candy bars for cigarettes, get a can of white paint for your side... If you can substitute julienne strips of green peppers, celery, carrots and other healthy low calorie high fiber foods, weight gain is minimized while health is maximized (vegetables are good for you!). Don't gobble them up either, try to make them last as long as a cigarette would. Play with them in your mouth. A plastic drinking straw has the same effect. It is still a pacifier, but a nontoxic one--who cares if you look a bit silly for a couple weeks. You may kick the habit and save hundreds of dollars in the process.

Exercise is a good substitute for smoking too. Get out and workout (it'll help with your weight too). While breathing hard you may find yourself coughing a lot more and bringing up some nasty secretions. This happens because your lungs are no longer being poisoned, they can start getting rid of all of those years of tar accumulations.

Drinking a lot of extra water will also help loosen the toxic secretions and get them out too. Substitute a glass of water when you want a cigarette and sip it slowly! make it last.

A little dizziness may be noted too. This is thought to result from areas of your brain finally receiving much needed oxygen instead of poisonous carbon monoxide.

Relaxation tapes and other techniques are also very helpful when you are stressed out and feel the need for nicotine. Take a few deep breaths and visualize yourself in a very relaxing situation, maybe at the beach basking in the sun with good friends, or doing something else enjoyable. Most people realize that if they can spend two minutes getting involved in something else that prohibits them from smoking, the urge will pass. The urges will also lessen after the first two days of abstinence. You may want to engage somebody in conversation when you have the urge. Pick a controversial topic or tell your friends all about how great this article is!

A good way to prevent a relapse is to decide what your major motivation for wanting to quit might be. Write that reason down and stick it in your wallet. The next time you want a cigarette, take it out and read it. Maybe it's because you are tired of setting a bad example for your children, maybe you don't want the new car/house/boy-girl friend/carpet or drapes to smell like an old ashtray, or maybe you are afraid of cancer and don't like spending hundreds to thousands of your hard-earned money. It's especially true when you consider the link cigarettes have to causing wrinkled skin, yellow teeth, brown fingernails, bad breath, coarse hair, shortness of breath with exercise, high blood pressure, heart disease, emphysema, cancers, stomach ulcers and all sorts of other problems (which are also expensive to treat!). Maybe you are simply tired of subsidizing the wealthy tobacco industry as they aim cigarettes at our children.

Whatever your reasons, don't give up on your attempts to quit smoking simply because you have had a few unsuccessful attempts so far. Remember that it is the most insidious and addicting drug known to man. If you can't do it solo, get help from your doctor. It will also help to have your spouse/significant other, close friends and co-workers

involved, ideally, they will quit with you. At the very least they can give you moral support and be a "buddy" you can call when you feel like you need a cancer stick.

Good Luck! Quitters are always quitters, winners keep trying until they succeed! If cigarettes are one of your main vices and the fact that you can't do without them is making you crazy, don't give up hope yet! The average successful quitter has tried to kick the habit 6 times, I have personally had success with folks who have tried over 20 times! There is no reason to give up hope--all it takes is a strong enough desire with the right resources to help you quit.

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