

Nicotine: A Powerful Addiction

If you have tried to quit smoking, you know how hard it can be. It is hard because nicotine is a very addictive drug. For some people, it can be as addictive as heroin or cocaine.

Quitting is hard. Usually people make two or three tries, or more, before finally being able to quit. Each time you try to quit, you can learn about what helps and what hurts. Quitting takes hard work and a lot of effort, but **you can quit smoking.**

Five Keys for Quitting

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 coworkers that you are going to quit and want their support. Ask them not to smoke around you or leave cigarettes out.
- Talk to your healthcare 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.

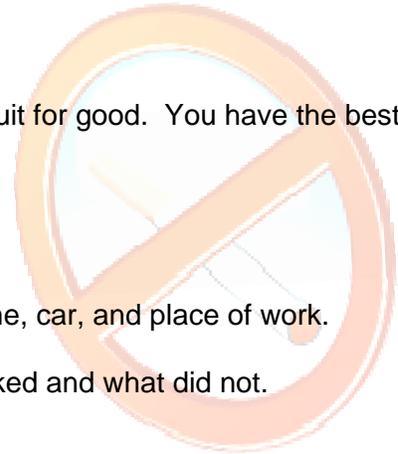
3. Learn New Skills and Behaviors

- 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 healthcare 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 healthcare provider before taking medications.

5. Be Prepared for Relapse or Difficult Situations

Most relapses occur within the first three 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.

**Taken from the United States Department of Health and Human Services*

You **CAN** quit smoking. Quitting smoking has immediate as well as long-term benefits for you and your loved ones. The resources listed below discuss the benefits of quitting and provide helpful guidance.

- **[Smokefree.gov](#)**
A website dedicated to helping you quit smoking.
- **[1-800-QUIT-NOW](#)**
<http://1800quitnow.cancer.gov/>
A free service that can help you quit smoking or chewing tobacco.
- **[I QUIT! What to do When You're Sick of Smoking, Chewing, or Dipping](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/how_to_quit/iquit/index.htm)**
http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit_smoking/how_to_quit/iquit/index.htm
A booklet that will help you quit all tobacco products.
- **[Questions and Answers About Smoking Cessation](http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Tobacco/cessation)**
<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Tobacco/cessation>
A fact sheet from the National Cancer Institute.
- **[Quit Smoking](http://www.ahrq.gov/consumer/index.html#smoking)**
<http://www.ahrq.gov/consumer/index.html#smoking>
Tools and guides to help you quit smoking.



Contact Cascade EAP for additional resources.

