

GETTING READY TO QUIT?

HERE'S HOW TO GET STARTED.

Most smokers know that quitting improves your health. But did you know that when you quit, **you will likely:**

- Reduce your chances of getting sick from smoking.
- Have more energy and breathe easier
- Heal more easily from surgery, injuries, and infections.
- Reduce your chance of a heart attack, stroke, or cancer.
- Reduce your chances of a second heart attack (if you've already had one).
- Give your baby a healthier start in life if you are pregnant.
- Help the people (and pets!) you live with be healthier. Breathing in smoke can cause asthma and other health problems, especially in children.
- Have more money to spend.
- Stop the hassles about finding a place to smoke and worrying about running out of cigarettes.

Most smokers have seriously tried to quit, usually more than once. But, when you cut back or stop smoking, withdrawal symptoms from nicotine can make you feel "not your normal self." Quitters can feel anxious, restless, sad or depressed, frustrated, or even angry. Withdrawal can make you hungrier and make it harder to sleep and think clearly.

Most withdrawal symptoms go away after 3-6 weeks, although cravings can last longer.

For some smokers, quitting means first figuring out why you want to quit and then finding the best ways to overcome withdrawal. Others may just decide to quit right now and want to know what to do. The experts recommend the **Four Keys to Quitting**.

Call the Oregon Tobacco Quitline at: 1-800-QUIT NOW or visit www.oregonquitline.org.

A Quitline specialist will talk to you and help you decide the best way to quit. The Quitline may also be able to send you **FREE** medications.

Four Keys to Quitting

These four keys can help withdrawal and help you successfully quit.

1. **Set a specific date to quit.**
2. **Take the stop smoking medication your doctor recommends.**
3. **Get help and support from friends, family, and your health professional.**
4. **Learn how to stay quit.**

KEY 1: SET A QUIT DATE

- Choose a day that works for you. What's better: Monday morning? Saturday morning? Special days like anniversaries or birthdays? *Maybe today is the day!*
- Consider giving yourself a few days to a couple of weeks to get ready. Try changing brands and cutting back. If you still smoke in your car or house, think about only smoking outside until your quit day.
- Be prepared for your quit day:
 - **Be determined to succeed & stay busy!**
 - Plan to spend time with non-smokers.
 - Collect a few things to have with you to help with urges. Quitters have tried sugarless gum and mints, red hot candy, water bottle, carrot sticks, a list of the reasons for quitting, pictures of family members and pets. Choose (or invent!) what you think will help.
- The day before your quit day, get rid of all your cigarettes, lighters and ashtrays. Clean your car and your home to help get ready.

KEY 2: TAKE A MEDICATION

- Take the medication your doctor recommends. *Stop smoking medications can double or triple your chances of success.*
- Medications can help you with physical, nicotine withdrawal symptoms so you can feel more like your "normal self" while learning not to smoke.
- **IMPORTANT: Be sure to use enough medication and use it as long as recommended.** People who smoke a lot sometimes use two medications together. But, some quitters stop using the medication as soon as they feel better. This can be too soon! **Your OHSU pharmacist** or your doctor can help you decide.

KEY 3: GET HELP AND SUPPORT

- Studies show that getting support helps increase your chances of quitting.
- Ask your friends and family for help, but be specific. Know that some people may be helpful and others may not. You want to make quitting easier, not more stressful!
- Find other quitters who can help. Try joining a class, getting individual coaching, or checking out internet quit sites.
- **Call the Oregon Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-Quit Now.**

KEY 4: LEARN HOW TO STAY QUIT

- Always take it one day at a time.
- Try avoiding smokers and smoking areas for the first weeks. Seeing and smelling smoke can be a big trigger and cause you to start up again.
- Stick with it even if you slip up.
- Remind yourself (even if you don't feel that way) that you will feel better and quitting will get easier.
- Help stay motivated by rewarding yourself.

Smokers who succeed, keep at it!

For help online:

Centers for Disease Control website at www.cdc.gov/tobacco or

National Cancer Institute website for live on-line assistance for smokers at www.smokefree.gov.

Commonly Asked Questions

Why do I get really uncomfortable when I try to quit?

These are normal feelings. Nicotine is a drug in tobacco that affects your mind and body by causing chemical changes in your brain. Most smokers know that smoking (nicotine) can help you feel relaxed and calm and also keep you alert and help you concentrate. It can also reduce your appetite and delay eating. Your body gets used to having lots of nicotine over years of smoking. When you suddenly cut way down or stop, your body reacts. Withdrawal starts within a couple of hours after your last cigarette.

What can I expect from withdrawal?

When smokers quit they often feel irritated, anxious, tired, sad or down or have a hard time thinking clearly. Many can't sleep as well, feel hungrier, and many gain some weight.

No wonder it is hard to quit!

Is there a way to quit without withdrawal?

Most smokers have withdrawal when they stop. Medications help, but there isn't a painless way to quit. Some smokers have said: "You just have to make up your mind to stop," or "Just get past the physical craving and you'll be alright," or "Don't beat yourself up if quitting is harder for you than for your friends" And, all are right! It can be hard to keep your mental attitude positive about quitting when you are feeling withdrawal.

Following the ***Four Keys to Quitting*** can help smokers make withdrawal easier and be successful.

I am trying to get away from nicotine! Why would I use nicotine patches, gum, or the lozenge?

This is a common question. Nicotine is an addictive drug. But it isn't nicotine that causes cancer and the other serious diseases. It is all the other chemicals in tobacco and in the smoke that cause so much harm. When you follow a program with the patch, gum, or lozenge you gradually decrease the amount of nicotine you are getting. Your body has more time to adjust and you get rid of all of the other chemicals from the tobacco and the smoke that cause harm. You can also try non-nicotine medications for quitting including bupropion (Zyban/Wellbutrin®) or varenicline (Chantix®).

Can I really quit?

YES! Quitting takes commitment and patience> it also takes staying with it even if it is hard to do. Think of past quit attempts as practice, not failures. Forty years ago more than 42% of Americans smoked. Now there are more ex-smokers than smokers. You can quit if you are willing to stick with it!