



# Health Bulletin



## Everyday Activities Can Create Intense Cravings For Smokers Trying To Quit

—Understanding And Treating Situational Cravings Can Help Quitters—

(NAPSA)—A craving is defined as a great, eager, consuming desire. A yearning. Anyone who has ever tried to quit smoking might say a craving is their worst enemy: a snarling beast they are forever trying to tame. Many feel that every time they gain some ground, there is something, some trigger that trips them up.

Smokers are faced with nicotine cravings that nag like little beasts until satisfied. For most of us, cravings for things such as our favorite foods may not have serious implications on our health, but for someone trying to quit smoking, confronting a cigarette craving can mean the difference between success and failure.

Nearly 44.5 million Americans smoke and 70 percent want to quit, but in reality, fewer than 5 percent every year are successful. A major culprit preventing more people from quitting isn't a simple lack of willpower...it's what experts call the "situational craving," and it's responsible for the majority of quitter lapses.

### Here's how it works

Smoking increases the number of receptors in the brain that thrive on nicotine, and frequent smoking in the same circumstances—such as while driving, drinking coffee or talking on the phone—train those receptors to expect nicotine during that activity. Experts call this a situational craving and it can be quite detrimental to a quit attempt. In fact, situational cravings are responsible for a majority of lapses when a smoker is trying to quit.

### COMMON SMOKING TRIGGERS

- Bad moods
- Seeing someone smoke or smelling smoke
- Drinking alcohol
- Morning cravings, such as drinking coffee or before breakfast
- Talking on the telephone
- After meals
- Driving
- Office breaks

### WAY2QUIT STEPS FOR SUCCESS

- Determine an appropriate method for quitting smoking—smokers should have a plan to address both nicotine withdrawal cravings and changing ingrained smoking habits. Using a therapeutic nicotine product, such as gum or lozenge, can reduce cravings fast
- Avoid situations that may bring on the urge to smoke
- Lower stress levels by participating in alternative activities such as exercise or listening to music
- Manage potential weight gain by eating a sensible diet and exercising
- Avoid dieting while trying to quit

For additional information visit [Way2Quit.com](http://Way2Quit.com).



“Many smokers may not realize that their brain is trained by cigarettes to crave nicotine, which is why they may have failed in their previous attempts at quitting,” said Saul Shiffman, Ph.D., world-renowned researcher and professor in the departments of psychology and pharmaceutical science at the University of Pittsburgh. “A smoker who is trying to quit needs to understand that it is a matter

of retraining their brain to live without nicotine and managing their cravings in the process, in order to successfully overcome their addiction. There are several readily accessible tools and treatments to help them relieve those cravings and begin to change their habits associated with smoking.”

Every smoker has certain times when they automatically reach for a cigarette—those situations or feelings that trigger smoking. A smoker trying to quit should identify those situational triggers and plan for alternatives to smoking.

Studies have shown that using therapeutic nicotine in the form of a gum or lozenge, can help to significantly reduce situational cravings. It can also double a smoker's chances of quitting successfully over cold turkey. Not every stop-smoking treatment may address situational cravings, so it is important to read a product's label to understand how the product works.

Smokers have a difficult road to face when trying to quit, but they need not face it alone. Way2Quit.com is a Web site that contains helpful information, including fun, animated minifilms that illustrate the agitation a smoker may experience from the cravings associated with quitting smoking. Way2Quit.com can also help smokers better understand and address their cravings as well as their habit, and help them develop an individualized plan to satisfy the ultimate craving: a smoke- and tobacco-free life.