



Expert Tips For Quitting Smoking In 2011



(NAPSA)—Are you or someone you know thinking of quitting smoking in 2011? Have you tried quitting smoking before? If you answered yes to either of these questions, you are not alone. The average smoker will try to quit six to nine times during his or her lifetime. It's important to know that while quitting isn't easy, it is possible. And, a support program and treatment plan can help.

Registered nurse Carol Southard treats smokers who are looking to quit. Below, she answers questions and provides tips that may improve your chances of quitting smoking.

Why is it so hard to quit smoking?

Smokers often think about quitting as a matter of willpower or choice. But quitting is very difficult for many smokers because nicotine is highly addictive.

Here's how it works: When you smoke, nicotine reaches the brain in about 10 to 20 seconds, causing a chemical called dopamine to be released. Dopamine provides a feeling of pleasure. Over time, smoking may become more than just a habit. It can become an addiction. When you stop smoking, it may cause your body to go through withdrawal. This can lead to a slipup in your quit attempt.

What do you tell people who want to quit?

People who want to quit should know that smoking is a treatable medical condition. The first step toward quitting is talking to your health care provider. They can help you make a plan to quit. Your quit plan should be designed just for you. It may include many types of support, from counseling to medication. Your health care provider can talk to you about the seven treatments approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

How fast can you see the benefits of quitting smoking?

Quitting smoking has lots of health benefits. If you are looking for reasons to quit, it's helpful to remember that:

- Within weeks of quitting smoking, your circulation and lung function may improve.
- One year after quitting smoking, your excess risk of heart disease may be reduced by half.
- Five to fifteen years after quitting smoking, your risk for stroke may be reduced to that of a nonsmoker.
- Ten years after quitting smoking, your risk of many cancers may decrease.

- Fifteen years after quitting smoking, your risk of heart disease may be that of a nonsmoker.

What resources can support my quit attempt?

For many people, smoking becomes "automatic." They may not realize when and why they smoke. For this reason, family and friends can be helpful resources. Ask them to help you identify times that you like to smoke, such as during your morning coffee or talking on the phone. Then think about ways that you can fight the urge to smoke when you're in those situations.

Speak to your doctor about other available resources, including local support groups, which are often helpful during a quit attempt. Also, many online resources exist. One resource is www.MyTimeToQuit.com, which provides tips on how to work with your doctor to design a quit plan that's right for you and has information on a prescription treatment option.

This information is courtesy of Pfizer Inc.

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