



Women And Smoking: A Fatal Attraction

(NAPSA)—No “ifs,” “ands” or “butts” about it—there’s a lot women can do to reduce their fatal attraction to smoking.

Almost 22 percent of all American adult women (22.2 million) are smokers. Although fewer women smoke than men, the percentage difference between the two has continued to decrease each year.

Women tend to smoke and have difficulty quitting for different reasons than men. Many women enjoy the sensory appeal. Others reach for a cigarette when they feel anxious, depressed or stressed. Some think of smoking as a way to lose weight, or prevent weight gain.

While smoking may appeal to women’s emotions or senses, it also poses countless serious health hazards—even more than it poses to their male counterparts. Besides facing many of the same risks as men, female smokers may encounter health consequences including infertility, problems with menstrual function, cervical cancer and pregnancy complications. Infants born to women who smoke have a lower birth weight and a significantly higher prevalence of asthma, colds, ear infections, lower respiratory infections and sudden infant death syndrome.

According to the March 2001 U.S. Surgeon General’s report, *Women and Smoking*, women who stop smoking can greatly reduce their risk of dying prematurely. Just 20 minutes after quitting, a person’s blood pressure drops close to what it was before their last cigarette; 24 hours after quitting, a smoker’s chance of heart attack decreases significantly; within one year after quitting, and a smoker’s risk of a heart attack decreases by 50 percent. What’s more, if a pregnant woman quits within the first months of her pregnancy, she can lower her baby’s chance of being born with



Women who want to quit smoking shouldn’t go it alone.

health problems.

Experts agree that because women smoke for so many reasons, they may need to try more than one approach at a time in order to kick the habit.

Smokers (over the age of 18) can take advantage of FDA-approved nicotine replacement therapies (NRT) such as the NicoDerm® CQ® nicotine patch and Nicorette® nicotine gum. These tools can double a smoker’s chance of quitting successfully versus “cold turkey.” Products like Nicorette and NicoDerm CQ have been clinically proven to reduce nicotine cravings and withdrawal symptoms without exposing the quitter to the harmful tars found in cigarette smoke.

Smokers also should join a behavioral support program that can help them deal with the psychological component of cigarette addiction. Committed Quitters®, a personalized behavioral support program available free of charge to users of Nicorette and NicoDerm CQ, has been shown to increase a smoker’s chance of quitting successfully when paired with NicoDerm CQ or Nicorette. Finally, smokers should rely on family and friends for support during their quit attempt.

Women (and all smokers) should know that it is never too late to quit smoking and reap the health benefits of a smoke-free lifestyle. For more information, visit www.quitnet.com.