



## **MERCY MEDICAL GROUP**

### **How To Quit Smoking**

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#### **PROBLEMS WITH SMOKING**

Tobacco contains nicotine, a drug that is addictive, and can make quitting smoking difficult. Smoking accounts for nearly a third of cancer deaths, including most lung cancer deaths. More than 400,000 deaths in the United States each year are from smoking-related illness. Smoking is also a contributor to heart disease.

Smoking in pregnant women leads to low birth weight infants and infant deaths. Smoking by parents of toddlers (ages 0 to 2 years) leads to more hospital admissions in those toddlers. Also, children whose parents smoke are more likely to have sore throats and ear infections.

#### **REASONS FOR QUITTING**

- Food will taste and smell better
- Chance of heart attack, stroke and heart disease decreases
- Circulation improves
- Breathing improves
- Coughing, congestion and fatigue decreases
- Risk of lung cancer or lung disease decreases
- Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidneys and pancreas decreases
- Savings of at least \$1,000 per year.

#### **SECONDHAND SMOKE**

Your smoking is affecting your family's health. In 1986, the United States Surgeon General reported that exposure to smoking could cause lung cancer in healthy, non-smokers. Recent studies also show secondhand smoke causes death from heart disease.

#### **GETTING READY TO QUIT**

- Many former smokers make several attempts to quit before they are successful, just keep trying
- Set a quit date when you will stop smoking
- Do not buy cigarettes beyond your quit date
- Tell your family and friends you plan to quit and ask for encouragement
- Notice when you smoke
- Determine what makes you want to smoke (for example, with morning coffee or after a meal)
- Change your smoking routines
- Smoke with your other hand
- Do not do anything else when you are smoking
- Smoke only in certain places, like outdoors
- When you want a cigarette, wait one minute
- Try to think of something to do instead of smoking (chew gum, drink a glass of water, eat carrot sticks, apple slices, sugar-free candy or mints)
- Buy one pack of cigarettes at a time
- Switch to a brand of cigarettes that you do not like

- Pay attention to smoking-related health symptoms you have developed
- Keep your hands busy.

### **ON YOUR QUIT DATE**

- Change your morning routine
- Stay busy
- Sit in a different place at the kitchen table
- Get rid of all your cigarettes (wet them down so you cannot retrieve them from the garbage)
- Put away your ashtrays
- When you get the urge to smoke, do something else instead
- Carry other things to put in your mouth (gum, hard candy, or a toothpick)
- At the end of the day, reward yourself for not smoking with a movie or a meal.

### **NICOTINE WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS DURING THE FIRST FEW WEEKS**

- Feeling tired
- Irritable
- Headache
- Trouble sleeping
- Intense craving for a cigarette
- Increased appetite
- Weight gain may be up to 10 pounds.

### **STAYING QUIT**

- The irritability and short temper will pass
- Exercise (walk, swim, bicycle)
- When tense, breathe deeply
- Think about ways to solve the problem (realize smoking will not make it better)
- Eat regular meals; feeling hungry is sometimes mistaken for desire to smoke
- Start a money jar with money you save by not smoking
- Let others know you quit; most will support you
- If you slip and smoke, do not be discouraged; many former smokers tried to stop several times before success. Quit again.

### **YOUR PHYSICIAN'S ROLE**

Your physician may recommend the nicotine patch or gum. Most nicotine gum and patches are now available without a prescription. Both the gum and the patch may help reduce the nicotine withdrawal symptoms you may experience while quitting. You cannot smoke at all while using the gum or the patch. People with high blood pressure or heart disease should check with their physician before using these products.

The nicotine gum is not chewed like regular gum. The nicotine gum should be chewed until a peppery flavor is tasted, then you should park the nicotine gum between your lip and gum to allow the nicotine to get into your body.

The nicotine patch should be used according to the directions on the product label. Some products are used for 16 hours and some are used for 24 hours. The patch should be applied to a non-hairy part of the upper body, and the patch site should be rotated daily for seven days. The patch should be removed before another one is applied and the patch can be worn in the shower. Carefully dispose of the patch, out of reach of children and pets. Nicotine replacement through a patch may be needed for six to 12 weeks.

Some antidepressants are also used to help people stop smoking and can be taken by mouth.

For more information regarding smoking cessation aids, please ask your health care professional or call the National Cancer Institute, at 1-800-4-CANCER.