

Take Control: The Time to Quit is Now!

Nicotine is the drug found in cigarettes and other tobacco products that keeps you hooked. The more you smoke, the more dependent upon nicotine your body becomes. Nicotine dependence means that it's difficult to stop smoking, even though it's causing you harm. When you stop using tobacco, your body will experience unpleasant withdrawal symptoms. No matter how long you've smoked, quitting smoking is a great decision that can improve your overall health.

Understanding Addiction

Nicotine produces physical and mood-altering effects in your brain that are temporarily pleasing. These effects make you want to use tobacco and lead to dependence. Stopping tobacco use causes withdrawal symptoms, including irritability and anxiety. Many effective treatments for nicotine dependence are available to help you manage cravings and withdrawal symptoms and stop smoking for good.

SIGNS OF NICOTINE DEPENDENCE

For some people, even a tiny amount of tobacco use can lead to nicotine addiction. Signs of addiction include:



RESOURCES

American Cancer Society:

www.cancer.org

American Lung Association:

www.lung.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

www.cdc.gov/tobacco

National Cancer Institute:

www.smokefree.gov

>INFOCUS

NICOTINE ADDICTION: BREAKING THE HABIT



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Know the Triggers

Certain activities or situations that occur during your daily routine can trigger nicotine cravings and perpetuate the cycle of nicotine use and addiction.



Waking up in the morning or having a cup of morning coffee

Taking breaks at work

Eating a meal



Drinking alcohol

Social settings with friends or family

Talking on the phone



High-stress situations

Smelling tobacco smoke

Driving

In order to quit using tobacco, you will have to identify what situations may raise your desire to smoke and learn to change or avoid them.

Proven Smoking Cessation Aids

Nicotine replacement therapy and non-nicotine medications are effective in treating nicotine dependence. Some over-the-counter options include nicotine patches, nicotine gum, and nicotine lozenges. Nicotine inhalers and nicotine nasal sprays are available by prescription. If you are pregnant or breast-feeding, smoke fewer than 10 cigarettes per day, or are under the age of 18, ask your doctor before taking any over-the-counter nicotine replacement products.

Don't Go It Alone: Get the Support You Need!

Every state in the U.S. has at least one telephone quit line. For a list of options in your area, call **800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669)**.

Individual or group counseling can help you to learn new techniques and prepare to quit smoking. Nicotine Anonymous groups are available in many locations. Talk to your doctor or health care provider for a list of options in your area.



Nicotine Rewires Your Brain

When you smoke, the nicotine that your body receives increases the release of brain chemicals called neurotransmitters, which help regulate your mood and behavior. One of these neurotransmitters is dopamine, which may improve your mood and activate feelings of pleasure. Because of this temporarily pleasurable sensation, your desire to use tobacco increases, leading to dependence and addiction.

Ask for Help

Politely ask family and friends to refrain from smoking around you as you attempt to break your nicotine addiction. Confide in a close friend or family member about the challenges that you are facing. Having another person around to help you through the quitting process may provide the encouragement that you need to keep going.

Deadly Addiction

As you smoke over time, you will gradually begin to crave more and more nicotine, causing you to smoke more frequently, becoming more addicted and less healthy. Smoking harms almost every organ in your body and puts you at a much higher risk of heart disease, stroke, and cancer.

Tips to Help Cope with Nicotine Withdrawal

Get Active & Rest Up

By becoming more active and getting 30 minutes of exercise 5 times per week, you can improve your mood. By exercising, you will boost your body's level of endorphins, which can make you feel better.

Sleep allows your body to detox while you work through your withdrawal symptoms. While going through nicotine withdrawal, it is perfectly normal to nap or go to bed earlier than you would normally.

Reduce Stress

Find a meditation or deep-breathing method that works best for you and turn to that method when the stress of nicotine withdrawal begins to creep up.

Immediate Effects

Nicotine can reach the brain in as little as 10 seconds after being inhaled. Smoking causes increased heart rate and blood pressure. When you smoke, your blood vessels constrict, causing a temperature drop in your hands and feet. New smokers may experience coughing, dizziness, and a dry, irritated throat.

Other effects may include nausea, weakness, stomach cramps, headache, coughing or gagging. These symptoms may lessen as you develop a tolerance to nicotine.



Kick the Habit for Good!

Nicotine is one of the most addictive substance known to mankind. Breaking the chains of nicotine addiction can be a real challenge, but don't give up! With time and patience, you will identify the activities and situations which increase your desire to smoke, learn how to overcome your cravings, and enjoy a tobacco-free life.