

Steps for Quitting Tobacco

Though quitting tobacco can look different for each individual in terms of strategies for coping with withdrawal, cravings, and maintenance of your quit status, there are some steps that tend to be the same for most people. These steps can help you be successful in your attempt to give up tobacco – be it smoking or smokeless tobacco. Take a step forward now by beginning this process.

Make a decision to quit

Some reasons for quitting might include:

- your health,
- health of a loved one,
- no smoking policies in places you frequent, and/or
- other reasons.

Set a quit date

Choosing a random date is fine, but you might want to choose a special occasion, such as:

- birthday,
- anniversary,
- holiday,
- New Year's Day,
- World No Tobacco Day (May 31st), or
- Great American Smokeout (3rd Thursday in November).

Whatever date you choose, mark the date on your calendar and circle it.



Get ready to quit

This is your time to prepare. Take two to three weeks to prepare before you quit tobacco.

- Choose the method you feel will make you the most likely to quit.
- Keep a journal of your tobacco use for at least three days to two weeks to notice what triggers your use of tobacco.
- Plan how you will deal with obstacles to quitting (withdrawal, cravings, social situations, etc.).
- Begin thinking about or making changes in your environment/surroundings to help you quit (e.g., post your top five reasons for quitting in obvious places; find all of your packs of tobacco so you can dispose of them; and think about what changes need to be made in your routine to eliminate tobacco use triggers).

Get support

Support can help increase your chances for quitting tobacco. Try any or all of the following types of support:

- family,
- friends,
- one-on-one support program,
- group support program,
- support from a non-smoker,
- support from another smoker who is trying to quit tobacco, and/or
- telephone quitline support and/or counseling.



Get medication

Talk with your health care provider about whether or not medication might help you in the quit process. Use only FDA-approved medications. Ask your doctor about:

- Varenicline
- Bupropion SR,
- Nicotine gum,
- Nicotine inhaler,
- Nicotine nasal spray, and
- Nicotine patch.



Stay quit

Make plans for maintaining your quit status. Decide how you will deal with offers to use tobacco and what you will do if you “slip” and use tobacco once you’ve quit.

Sources:

American Cancer Society (2005). Quitting smoking. Retrieved March 3, 2005. From http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED_10_13X_Guide_for_Quitting_Smoking.asp?sitearea=PED.

United States Department of Health and Human Services (2000). You can quit smoking consumer guide. Retrieved March 9, 2005. From <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/quit/canquit.htm>.