



Now is the Time to Quit Smoking

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The New Year often creates an opportunity to work on improving our health, which can often mean looking towards the health benefits of quitting smoking.

One of the reasons smoking can be a notoriously difficult addiction to stop is because our routines cause strong cravings whenever 'triggered'. For example, if a cigarette is smoked every day with a cup of coffee, then the same warm cup-of-joe *without* a cigarette can start a neurological chemical reaction in our brains that cause an intense craving for a cigarette. These cravings can become difficult to ignore, uncomfortable and cause individuals to return to smoking.

Here are some things to consider to increase your chance of success with a smoking cessation plan:

- Consult with a physician about nicotine replacement options and if they might be right for you. Nicotine patches, lozenges, and gum have all been shown to be successful in decreasing cravings and improving smoking cessation outcomes for individuals. Many physicians and nurse are available via a tele-health format so you do not have to make an office visit, and are likely to be very supportive of individuals who are choosing to quit smoking at this time.
- Determine a quit date. Mark the day you are planning to quit on your calendar and tell people about it. Make sure your date is not too far off, but give yourself enough time to see your physician, purchase nicotine replacement options, tell people and make a plan.
- Make a list of reasons quitting is important to you. Review the list daily and share the list of reasons and your quit date with others.
- Keep active. Find activities that you can do that are unrelated to things you did while smoking. Hiking, completing puzzles, playing solitaire, and taking a walk are all activities you can try. It is important to find activities to engage in that replace the time you would have been smoking and decrease activities you would generally do with a cigarette in your hand.
- Use technology. There are many free applications available on your smart phone that you can use to help you quit. They are full of quick quit tips, often have ways to track

how many days you have successfully gone smoke-free, and some even have opportunities to consult with a quit coach or get real-time support.

- Smoking is not a failure. If you have a cigarette while you are attempting to quit do not give up. Examine what led up to you choosing to have that cigarette. Review what has been working and readjust. Keep trying.

Reference

[Quitting tobacco \(who.int\)](#)