

Smoking Cessation – A Goal for 2010

Why is cigarette smoking a problem?

Cigarette smoking is the number one cause of preventable death in the United States, and it accounts for approximately 438,000 deaths each year.¹ In spite of figures like this,

nearly 45 million Americans continue to smoke, and roughly 1,200 children and teenagers start smoking every day.² There are many reasons why people begin smoking cigarettes. However, two primary reasons for why people continue to smoke are: 1) habit and, 2) an addictive substance called nicotine.

Ways to be smoke free without the use of medication:³

- **Keep active** – try to exercise or do other hobbies or activities
- **Drink lots of water and juices**
- Sign up for **smoking cessation classes** or start following a self-help plan
- **Avoid situations** that would **increase** the **urge** to smoke
- **Reduce or avoid alcohol**
- **Consider changing your routine.** Use a different route to work, drink tea instead of coffee, etc.
- **Tell your friends and family** about your Quit Day and goal.
- **Get oral substitutes** such as gum, hard candy, carrots, etc.
- Practice saying, “**No thank you, I don’t smoke.**”
- **Believe that YOU CAN DO THIS!**

Why is nicotine addictive?

Nicotine acts as a stimulant on the brain. This results in a pleasant feeling and relaxation. A person’s desire to have these feelings may lead to the development of a need for nicotine. As the dependence grows, so does the person’s tolerance of nicotine. Tolerance means that there is a need to smoke more cigarettes to experience the same level of satisfaction. The growing dependence and desire for the pleasant effects of nicotine are the main reasons why a person will continue to smoke for many years.¹

How can I quit smoking?

There are several ways for individuals to quit smoking. However, there are a few important steps that can help lead to a successful outcome: making the decision to quit, setting a quit date and choosing a quit plan, dealing with nicotine withdrawal, and remaining smoke-free.³

One method for stopping smoking is to overcome the nicotine addiction. This could be accomplished by using nicotine replacement products. Nicotine replacement products include nicotine patches, nicotine lozenges, nicotine gum, nicotine nasal spray, and a nicotine inhaler. These products work by providing a source of nicotine other than cigarettes, decreasing any withdrawal symptoms an individual may experience when they stop smoking. These products also contain a

controlled amount of nicotine, allowing for a gradual decrease in the amount of nicotine the patient receives until they are able to stop completely.¹ The nicotine nasal spray and the nicotine inhaler require a prescription from a doctor, while the other products are available over-the-counter (without a prescription). Each of these forms of nicotine replacement has been shown to be effective in helping people to stop smoking, nearly doubling their chances of success.⁴ However, it is important to choose a nicotine replacement product based upon each individual's situation. According to one information source, "Patients who smoke continuously throughout the day might have better success with the nicotine patches, because these provide a sustained, steady release of nicotine."¹ If a patient only smokes here and there during the day, the gum or lozenge may be a better choice.¹ If someone wishes to try one of these products, it is best to speak with a pharmacist or their doctor so they can choose the option that would best meet their needs.⁵

Other medications that are used to help stop smoking include Wellbutrin SR or Chantix. These medications do not contain nicotine. Wellbutrin SR is thought to work for smoking cessation by affecting the same parts of the brain as nicotine.^{6,7} Wellbutrin SR is a prescription medication, and it is also available by its generic name, bupropion. Patients taking Wellbutrin SR alone or in combination with a nicotine patch have been shown to have an increased chance of remaining smoke-free.⁸ Patients taking Wellbutrin SR may experience suicidal thoughts, agitation, anxiety, or insomnia.⁹ Wellbutrin SR may also cause nausea, dizziness, constipation, confusion, or headache.⁹ Chantix (generic name – varenicline) is another prescription medication used for smoking cessation. It acts in the same area of the brain as nicotine and helps to decrease both the cravings and withdrawal effects due to nicotine. Chantix is not currently available as a generic medication.⁵ Chantix has been shown to increase patients' chances of remaining smoke-free.¹⁰ Patients taking Chantix should watch for possible suicidal thoughts or attempts, depression, vivid dreams, or insomnia.¹¹ Patients may also experience nausea, vomiting, or constipation.¹¹

Okay, I want to quit smoking. What should I do now?

There are several options to consider when selecting a product to help stop smoking. It is important that a person first talk with their doctor when making the decision to quit smoking. Doctors will take many factors into consideration when choosing the best therapy to help a patient help quit successfully, including: 1) daily nicotine intake, 2) other medical conditions that are present, and 3) individual preferences.⁸ Don't be afraid to take that first step – talk to your doctor!

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