

# Staying a Non-smoker

**Think of yourself as a non-smoker from the moment you quit. Learn new ways of doing things without cigarettes and over time the desire to smoke will fade. If an urge to smoke returns, you can remain a non-smoker by knowing ways to deal with it.**

## The smart way to quit

When you quit smoking your body craves nicotine, giving you an urge to smoke. You may also suffer other nicotine withdrawal effects. You will have the best chance of quitting if you use an advice or support service and, if you smoke more than 10 cigarettes per day, a 'quitting medicine'. Medicines proven to help quitting are:

- Non-prescription Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)
- Non-nicotine quitting medicines, which must be prescribed by a doctor.

A doctor or pharmacist can explain how to use these medicines.



## Staying a non-smoker

A key to remaining a non-smoker is learning how to deal with situations that make you feel like smoking, such as social occasions with alcohol or smoking friends. In the first few weeks, when you often have smoking cravings, it may be easier to avoid these situations. When you are ready, you will need to prepare for and face these situations without smoking.

Other situations that may tempt you to smoke and that you will need to plan for include:

- Stress and difficult emotions (e.g., grief, anger, guilt) – a cigarette is not necessary to deal with stress. Learn new problem solving skills, new ways to relax and new ways to deal with emotions
- Boredom – try a new hobby or some regular exercise
- Habits and routines – change routines and learn to distract your self
- Weight gain – you can keep weight gain low with good eating habits and regular exercise
- Withdrawal symptoms – can be reduced with a ‘quitting medicine’.

## Staying motivated

Every day spent smoke free makes your body healthier and will help break the smoking habit. It may take a while to learn to be a non-smoker, but stick with it and see and feel the benefits.

Write down your reasons for quitting. Carry this around and read it every time you feel like smoking. Think about your and your family's health. Think of the money you'll save (over \$3,000 a year if you smoke 20 cigarettes a day).

Most people who successfully quit and remain a non-smoker have made several serious attempts. If you are finding it hard to stay quit, advice and support is available – use it!

## Cravings

It is normal to get smoking cravings and resisting them is a necessary step in making them go away. To fight off cravings, try the **4Ds**:

**Delay** acting on the urge to smoke. Don't open a pack or light a cigarette. After a few minutes, the urge to smoke will weaken

**Deep breathe** – take a long slow breath in, and slowly out again. Do this three times

**Drink water** – sip it slowly

**Do something else** – to take your mind off smoking.

## Coping with setbacks

Do not be disheartened if you give in to an urge to smoke. A slip-up is a setback, not a defeat. Don't let one cigarette lead you back to full time smoking.

- Remind yourself of how much work you have put into quitting and how far you have come – do you really want to start all over again?

- Try to work out why you smoked again. What was the trigger? How were you feeling at the time?
- Use the answers to prepare for the next time you are tempted to smoke.
- Have you found replacements for all the things you used cigarettes for? Think of what you can do to enjoy life without cigarettes.

If you are smoking again,

- You may feel disappointed, but take pride in what you've already achieved.
- Plan another 'quit' date as soon as possible.
- Remind yourself of your reasons for quitting.
- Get some support (e.g., ring the Quitline).

## Self care

Quitting can be stressful. If you have suffered from depression, anxiety or another mental illness, consult your doctor before quitting.

- Eat regular, healthy meals and snacks, including plenty of fruits, vegetables and grain foods. Limit foods high in fat, sugar or salt.
- Drink enough water every day to satisfy your thirst and to keep your urine 'light-coloured' (unless a doctor advises otherwise).
- Exercise at a moderate level for at least 30 minutes on all or most days of the week.

### After quitting for:

12 hours – Almost all nicotine from cigarettes is out of your system

Several days – Your sense of taste and smell improves

2 months – Your lungs will no longer be producing extra phlegm caused by smoking

12 months – Your increased risk of dying from heart disease is half that of a continuing smoker

10 years – Your risk of lung cancer has more than halved and continues to decline (provided you do not already have it)

15 years – Your risk of heart attack and stroke is almost the same as a person who has never smoked.

- Reduce caffeine intake (tea, coffee, cola, chocolate, energy drinks). Without nicotine, your body is more sensitive to caffeine.
- Limit alcohol intake to help control weight.
- Be firm about not smoking and seek support from others.
- Make your home and car smoke free or have a smoke free area for yourself.
- Learn and use new relaxation techniques.
- Treat yourself with some of the money saved by not smoking.

**Note:** Some medicines are affected by smoking and doses of your medicines may need to be changed when you quit. Ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice.

## For more information

### **The Quitline**

Phone: 13 7848 (13 QUIT) for information and a free Quit Pack.

Quit websites:

[www.quitnow.info.au](http://www.quitnow.info.au)

[www.quitcoach.org.au](http://www.quitcoach.org.au)

[www.quit.org.au](http://www.quit.org.au)

[www.quitsa.org.au](http://www.quitsa.org.au)

[www.quittas.org.au](http://www.quittas.org.au)

[www.actcancer.org](http://www.actcancer.org)

[www.cancerCouncil.com.au](http://www.cancerCouncil.com.au)

[www.cancerqld.org.au](http://www.cancerqld.org.au)

### **Healthdirect Australia**

Phone: 1800 022 222

Website: [www.healthinsite.gov.au](http://www.healthinsite.gov.au)

### **Consumer Medicine Information (CMI)**

Your pharmacist can advise on CMI leaflets.

### **National Prescribing Service (NPS) Medicines Information**

Phone: 1300 MEDICINE (1300 633 424)

Website: [www.nps.org.au](http://www.nps.org.au)

### **The Poisons Information Centre**

In case of poisoning phone 13 11 26 from anywhere in Australia.

***Pharmacists are medicines experts.  
Ask a pharmacist for advice when  
choosing a medicine.***

## Related fact cards

» *Alcohol*

» *Exercise and the Heart*

» *Nicotine Replacement Therapy*

» *Relaxation Techniques*

» *Smoking*

» *Weight and Health*

Your Self Care Pharmacy: