

MIDTOWN WEST MEDICAL AT KING PLOW ARTS CENTER

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Kicking the Habit: Tips for Becoming a Non-Smoker

By Kimball Johnson, M.D. and Gloria Carusi, Nurse Practitioner

It isn't easy to stop smoking, no matter how strong your motivation or "will-power," but it CAN be done! The American Heart Association (AHA) reports that since 1965, more than 40 percent of all adults who ever smoked eventually quit. Still, according to the 2000 Surgeon General's Report, tobacco smoking remains the No. 1 cause of preventable disease and death in the United States.¹

Here are some tried-and-true tips we've gathered from patients and friends to help make your attempt to kick the habit stick:

- Tell your family, friends, and co-workers that you're quitting, and ask them to SUPPORT YOU!
- Get rid of all tobacco within easy reach.
- Clean your home, car, and clothing to rid them of smoke odor.
- Try to avoid other smokers and areas where you'll be exposed to smoke.
- Brush your teeth four times a day, and get your teeth cleaned and whitened.
- Pamper yourself with a (non-caloric) reward daily or weekly, and set a goal for a large reward; for example, plan to take a mini- vacation or attend a sporting event after three months "smoke-free."
- Take pictures of old ashtrays, or fill a dirty ashtray with water and watch what happens!

If these methods fail you but you're still serious about quitting, consider a course of high-dose Wellbutrin™ in combination with a nicotine patch (in consultation with and under the supervision of your physician). Also, many people report success with Nicorette™ or other nicotine chewing gums.

Need some inspiration? Consider these facts from the AHA:

- After one year off cigarettes, the excess risk of heart disease caused by smoking is reduced by half. After 15 years of abstinence, the risk of heart disease and stroke for ex-smokers is similar to that for people who've never smoked.¹
- Male smokers who quit between ages 35 to 39 add an average of five years to their lives; female quitters in this age group add three years.¹

Quitting smoking will improve your health, appearance, and sense of accomplishment.

GOOD LUCK!

¹ "Smoking Cessation," © 2004 by The American Heart Association.