

Staying Quit

(Adapted from www.nysmokefree.com)

Staying quit is the final step in the process, and you can use the same methods to stay quit as those that helped you through the initial withdrawal. Think ahead to the times where you think you are going to smoke and plan on how you will use alternatives and activities to cope with these difficult situations.

Remember to use the "5 D's" when you get the urge to smoke. *The 5 D's* - Delay, Drink water, Do something else, Deep breathe, Discuss with a friend.

- Never forget why you stopped smoking!
- Never taken even a puff of another cigarette.
- Avoid dangerous situations (boredom, stress, alcohol, etc.) that are commonly associated with smoking.
- Don't rationalize and think you can have just ONE cigarette.
- Reward yourself!
- Be proud of trying to stop smoking.
- Begin to think of yourself as a nonsmoker.
- Make some specific plans for handling difficult situations.

Remember that many people do slip and have a cigarette, so don't be too hard on yourself. If you need to, get yourself "back on track" and use it as a learning experience.

There are several specific concerns that arise after you have quit smoking that make staying quit more difficult. You can prepare for each of these before your initial "Quit Date" by educating yourself on techniques to deal with them.

LIVING WITH A SMOKER

Seeing a person where you live light a cigarette will more often than not trigger the impulse to smoke, even if you had not been thinking of smoking until then. It is important that you plan for these situations. Here are some suggestions:

- Ask for cooperation from the smokers you live with. Suggest they contain their smoking to the outside or, at least, to a designated area in the home.
- Ask family and friends to respect your decision to stop smoking. Ask if they will stop smoking around you.
- Ask others to be mindful of their cigarettes by not leaving open packs lying around, emptying ashtrays regularly, and taking their cigarettes with them when they leave.
- It may take a significant degree of assertiveness to gain complete cooperation, but it is worth it.

SOCIAL SITUATIONS

In a social situation where cigarettes are readily available, a person in the quit process needs to approach all temptations in a confident manner. Here are some tips to help you stay a nonsmoker in social situations.

- Remember the reasons you stopped smoking; those reasons remain valid, even though you will be in this situation.
- Visualize yourself as a nonsmoker BEFORE you are in the situation. Decide what to say if offered a cigarette. Take note of what other nonsmokers are doing in the same situation.
- Limit yourself in regards to the smoking of others. Think about how you can tell others your limits; practice by saying it out loud into a mirror until you believe yourself.

- Avoid alcohol as much as possible. The effect of alcohol will make you more likely to rationalize smoking, or even forget your reasons for quitting smoking in the first place.
- Bring a "prop" or something to keep your mouth and/or hands occupied.
- Try to have a support person with you at the party that can keep you on track when the times get tough.

WEIGHT GAIN

Studies have shown that 75% of people who stop smoking do not gain weight, and those that do gain weight gain between five and seven pounds. Most weight gain occurs in the first few weeks after stopping smoking. Some people actually lose weight when they stop smoking. You may begin to feel more energetic, especially if you are exercising during the stop smoking process.

People gain weight after stopping smoking because of the loss of nicotine in their body. Nicotine is a stimulant that speeds up the basal metabolic rate in the human body. When a person stops smoking, their basal metabolic rate slows down, and if their activity rate does not increase and/or their food intake does increase, some weight gain may occur. Sometimes the craving for a cigarette is confused with a hunger pain, so people trying to quit may eat to satisfy this craving for a cigarette.

Gaining a few pounds is not nearly as dangerous as smoking. To be at the same risk of early death associated with smoking one pack of cigarettes a day, a person would need to be about 100 pounds above their ideal weight.

SCHEDULING AN APPOINTMENT AT UHS

Your primary care provider (PCP) at the University Health Service can help you quit smoking. Call 275-2662 to schedule an appointment at the University Health Service (UHS). UHS offers a full range of services. All visits to UHS are confidential.

RELATED HEALTH LINKS

American Cancer Society: General information about cancer with statistical data. Can be useful for families, health care professionals, and cancer survivors. www.cancer.org

American Heart Association: Comprehensive information on heart related diseases and activities of the AHA. www.americanheart.org

American Lung Association: Focuses on asthma, tobacco control, and environmental health. Offers the Freedom From Smoking written guide, audiocassette program, and other information on local group clinics and online programs. www.lungusa.org

National Institutes of Health: A broad source of medical information. www.nih.gov

New York State Department of Health: New York State Department of Health Website with a direct link to the New York State Smokers' Quitsite. www.health.state.ny.us