



Make *Yours* Healthy Choices!



Individualized Care Management, Inc.

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Quit Smoking ~ Be healthier tomorrow: quit today!

Cigarette smoking is the single most preventable cause of death and disability in the United States. Tobacco use, especially smoking, contributes to more than 430,000 deaths each year. Have you, a friend, or family member, ever made a New Year's resolution to quit smoking? Has the resolution succeeded? Chances are you won't be completely successful the first time. Often it may take a person five or six attempts to successfully kick the habit. If at first you don't succeed...Keep trying!

Benefits of quitting smoking, Let us count the ways:

Your own health: If you're an adult who smokes, you've heard the admonition countless times that tobacco can kill you. But did you know that quitting could still add years to your life, even if you've been a longtime smoker? Smoking, as widely understood, causes heart disease and cancer as well as a range of quality-of-life afflictions from yellowed fingernails to wrinkled faces. Conversely, those who quit smoking are rewarded with immediate benefits. Within eight hours of quitting, the Cancer Institute points out, the level of dangerous carbon monoxide gas in the blood returns to normal and the chance of having a heart attack begins to decrease within 24 hours. In two to three weeks, lung function increases by 30 percent, and in one year, the risk of coronary heart disease drops in half. After 10 years, the chance of dying from lung cancer also drops by about half.

Family members and co-workers: Smoking can harm not only the smoker but also the smoker's family and co-workers. A person who smokes increases his or her family members' and coworkers' risk of lung cancer and heart disease because of secondhand smoke. The risk of his or her children dying from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) or having asthma, frequent ear infections, and respiratory infections is

also increased. If the children already have asthma or allergies, a parent's smoking may cause these condition to get worse. If you smoke, your children are more likely to start smoking. Smoking also increases the risk of problem pregnancies, affecting both the mother and fetus.

Financial: Smoking a pack a day, with an average cost of \$5.00 a pack, can cost a smoker \$1820.00 a year in the price of cigarettes alone. You can also figure in the increased costs of doctor visits for smoking related illnesses. Additionally, add in missed income due to absence from work caused by smoking related illnesses. Smoking can cost you not only your health, but can also hit you in your pocketbook.

How can you stop using tobacco?

Because nicotine in tobacco is addicting, stopping the use of tobacco is more difficult than simply changing a habit. Those who successfully quit using tobacco usually use a combination of strategies that may include:

- **Self-help:** To plan and maintain your attempt to stop smoking, obtain publications from national health organizations such as the American Cancer Society, American Lung Association and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as your state and local public health departments.
- **Group support:** Meet with others who are working to become smoke-free.
- **Individual counseling:** This includes one-on-one contact with a trusted physician, psychologist, nurse or counselor.
- **Cold turkey:** This is a sudden, decisive break from cigarettes. You stop smoking completely with little or no reduction beforehand.
- **Medication:** Medication helps reduce cravings and ease the withdrawal symptoms of nicotine until the worst

effects are over. Medication comes in two basic forms. Nicotine replacement products deliver controlled amounts of nicotine to your brain by way of your bloodstream, without smoking. Non-nicotine medication, such as bupropion, lessens withdrawal symptoms, such as irritability, anxiety, restlessness and depressed mood.

- **Exercise:** This may help reduce the stress and weight gain that sometimes occur after you quit smoking.
- **Find a buddy:** Ask a nonsmoking friend or family member to be available for you to contact when you experience tough times or when you have reason to celebrate.
- **Alternate therapies:** Some smokers turn to hypnosis or acupuncture to help them quit, though little proof exists that either is effective.

A marathon, not a sprint...

Often it is hard to see how you are going to reach a long-term goal, such as becoming and remaining a person who does not smoke. It may help to break a long-term goal down into smaller goals that can be achieved over short periods of time. How quickly you move through the process from smoking to no longer smoking is up to you. The following suggestions may be helpful.

- **Set your goals clearly:** Where do you want to be in terms of your smoking in the next weeks, months and years?
- **Reward yourself for meeting your goals.**
- **Pace yourself:** You may want or need to quit gradually, over the course of several months or a year.
- **Be realistic:** Be careful not to set goals, including a timeline for quitting, that are higher than you can realistically meet.

Remember: You can do it!

Note: This information is meant to complement the advice of your health care providers, not to replace it. Talk to your doctor if you have any health care concerns.

