

THE WHYS AND HOWS OF QUITTING SMOKING FOR YOU

There are many reasons why you may have started smoking. You may have picked up your first cigarette because you feel stressed or depressed, the people in cigarette ads look cool, your friends or parents already do, or you just don't believe cigarette smoking is bad for you. But smoking can do some real damage to your body. Here are some options that will help you kick the habit.

The Dangers of Smoking

- **Death.**

Smoking kills a Madison Square Garden sold-out concert worth of people about every two weeks. That's almost 34,000 people a month.

- **Cancer.**

Cigarettes contain many chemicals that you would refuse to put into your body on their own, such as the ingredients in nail polish remover, toilet cleaner, and embalming fluid. These chemicals cause changes in the cells of your body and make them grow uncontrollably, giving you cancer. Cancer usually happens wherever you breathe in the cigarette smoke, including the mouth, throat, and lungs, but also causes cancer in other parts of the body as well.

- **Breathing Difficulties.**

The chemicals in cigarette smoke also irritate the lungs, making it hard to breathe. Competing in sports will be very tough since you won't be able to breathe as well as your non-smoking opponents and teammates.

- **Dangers to Friends and Family**

Just by smoking around your friends and family, they may experience the same dangers as you do by directly smoking the cigarette. Second-hand smoke causes breathing problems, cancer, and possibly even death in those you smoke around the most.

- **Illegal Drug Use**

Since smoking is against the law for teens, it is a small step for cigarette smoking teens to go on and use drugs that are illegal for all ages. In fact, many teens that use illegal drugs started breaking the law by smoking cigarettes first.

- **Lighter Wallet.**

As states continue to raise the amount cigarettes are taxed, the price for a pack will continue to go up. This means you will have less money to see your favorite band or go to the movies with your friends.

Ways to Help You Quit

- **School Programs.**

Check with your school's guidance counselor or nurse to see if they have a program to help you quit. A program at your school will be able to give you information on quitting that is helpful to students just like you.

- **Talk with a Professional.**

A tobacco treatment counselor or psychologist will help you understand why you smoke and give you techniques that will help change your behavior.

- **Talk with Your Family Doctor.**

Another professional you can talk to is your family doctor. The doctor may discuss certain drugs that can help you quit. Some options include the nicotine patch (Nicoderm), nicotine gum (Nicorette), and Zyban. Both Nicoderm and Nicorette help wean you off of cigarettes by giving your body less and less nicotine without having to smoke cigarettes. Zyban works by changing the chemicals in your brain.

- **Encourage Others to Quit With You.**

Quitting together with your family and friends will not only give you a built in support group, but it will also help eliminate temptation at home and when you hang out with friends who smoke.

Quitting smoking is really hard so you may want to try a combination of the above mentioned quitting strategies. Whichever strategies you choose, by quitting you will

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prevent many of the dangers of smoking from happening to you, your friends, and family.