



# 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 medicine, 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 – a cigarette is not necessary to deal with stress. Learn problem solving skills and new ways to relax
- Boredom – try a new hobby or some regular exercise
- Habits and routines – change routines and learn to distract yourself
- Weight gain – you can keep weight gain low with good eating habits and regular exercise
- Withdrawal symptoms – can be reduced with a 'quitting medicine'

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

## 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

If nicotine cravings start, 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, especially if you do the following:

**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 time you have put into quitting – 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.

Your **Self Care** Pharmacist

## Self care

Quitting can be stressful. If you have suffered a mental illness, consult your doctor before quitting.

- Eat regular, healthy meals and snacks, including plenty of fruit, vegetables and grains. Limit foods high in fat, sugar or salt.
- Drink at least two litres (8 glasses) of water a day (unless a doctor advises not to).
- Exercise regularly. The Heart Foundation recommends at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise on all or most days of the week.
- Reduce caffeine intake (tea, coffee, cola, chocolate). 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 practice new relaxation techniques.
- Treat yourself with some of the money saved by not smoking.

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.

## Related fact cards

- *Alcohol*
- *Exercise and the Heart*
- *Nicotine Replacement Therapy*
- *Relaxation Techniques*
- *Smoking*
- *Weight and Health*

## For more information

The Quitline – phone 13 7848 (13 QUIT) for information and a free Quit Pack.

Quit web sites:

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| <a href="http://www.quitnow.info.au">www.quitnow.info.au</a>   | <a href="http://www.quitwa.com">www.quitwa.com</a>                     |
| <a href="http://www.quitcoach.org.au">www.quitcoach.org.au</a> | <a href="http://www.actcancer.org">www.actcancer.org</a>               |
| <a href="http://www.quit.org.au">www.quit.org.au</a>           | <a href="http://www.cancercouncil.com.au">www.cancercouncil.com.au</a> |
| <a href="http://www.quitsa.org.au">www.quitsa.org.au</a>       | <a href="http://www.cancerqld.org.au">www.cancerqld.org.au</a>         |
| <a href="http://www.quittas.org.au">www.quittas.org.au</a>     |  |

**Consumer Medicine Information (CMI)** leaflets – your pharmacist can advise on availability.

**NPS Medicines Line** – phone 1300 888 763 Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm EST.

**The Poisons Information Centre** – in case of poisoning phone 131 126 from anywhere in Australia.

**Pharmacy Self Care Support** – phone 1300 369 772 and ask for the Pharmacy Self Care Field Officer.

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

