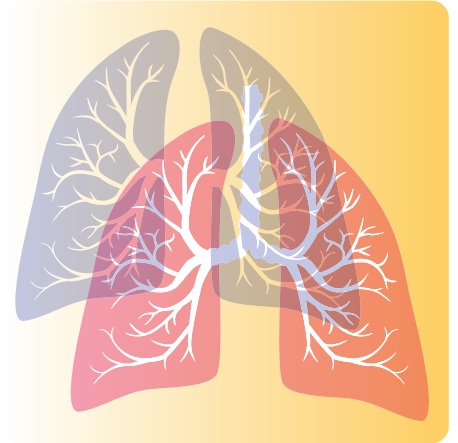


Withdrawal and Relapse from Tobacco Use

Most people who are trying to stop smoking will have some withdrawal symptoms. It helps to remember that these symptoms are usually temporary and mean that you are on the road to recovery from tobacco use. Everyone responds differently to withdrawal from smoking and tobacco use. These reactions can range from mild cravings



to feelings of depression. Most likely you will experience some difficulty in quitting, but there will be positive rewards for your efforts as well.

What symptoms might I have after I stop smoking?

Chest tightness: Tightness in your chest can be caused by the body craving nicotine or it may be sign of a more serious problem. Consult your health care provider if this symptom occurs.

Concentration problems: Nicotine is a stimulant, so some people find it helps with their concentration. It may take one or two weeks for your concentration to return to normal without nicotine.

Constipation: Constipation may occur for a brief time. It typically goes away in a week or two. Drinking plenty of water will help. Eat whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. Exercising may also help.

Coughing/clearing your throat/dry throat/postnasal drip: While you are smoking, your body creates extra mucus to help rid your body of the harmful chemicals in cigarettes. Coughing and other symptoms are usually signs that your body is in the stages of healing. For example, when you stop smoking, you may produce more mucus/phlegm than usual. This is normal. Drinking plenty of water makes it easier for you to cough out the mucus/phlegm, or sucking on a hard candy may ease the discomfort of a dry throat.

Craving a cigarette or tobacco: Cravings usually only last a few minutes and decrease over time. Keep that in mind as you work your way through this period. Distract yourself by doing something other than smoking (taking a walk, calling a friend, reading a book, keeping activeworking on a hobby, etc.).

Depression: It is not uncommon to have symptoms of depression after quitting. Remind yourself that stopping smoking will have positive effects on your health and the health of those around you. The negative feelings and withdrawal symptoms will eventually pass. Talk about your feelings and become involved in physical activity that suits your lifestyle.

Hunger: Cravings for nicotine can make you feel like you are hungry. It is important not to replace cigarettes or smokeless tobacco with food. Try to drink extra fluids, eat a healthy diet and healthy snacks. Plan ahead. Before you stop tobacco use, get healthy foods you will eat at times when you feel hungry.

Irritability or Anxiety: Your body's craving for nicotine may cause irritability after you stop smoking. Irritability will lessen in about 2-4 weeks. Using nicotine replacement products may help you make the transition to stopping altogether and reduce irritability. Remember to be patient with yourself because the benefits of not smoking will be worth the effort.

Sleep difficulty: Nicotine can affect how deeply

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you sleep. Dreaming about smoking is common. Taking a warm bath, avoiding caffeinated beverages or products and deep breathing exercises may help you sleep better.

Tiredness: Nicotine is a stimulant, so giving up nicotine may give you a feeling of being tired (fatigued). Feeling tired is your body's reaction to not having nicotine. Your energy will increase as your body gets adjusted to not having heavy doses of nicotine. Eating healthy foods and avoiding sugar can help.

What should I do if I relapse?

If you relapse, stop smoking or using tobacco products immediately. Get rid of any cigarettes you may have. Recognize that you have had a slip. You can recover from this small setback.

- Don't be too hard on yourself.
- Get yourself on the non-smoking track again.
- Most smokers try to quit many times before they are successful.

Identify the trigger that caused the relapse and what prompted you to smoke or use tobacco products. Decide how you will cope with that trigger in the future.

What can I do to prevent relapse?

During a craving, remember the 5D's.

1. **Deep Breathing.** A simple deep breathing exercise can help you deal with tension.
2. **Drink water.** This will help decrease cravings.
3. **Delay.** Cravings fade away in a couple of minutes. Try to wait it out. If you are using nicotine replacement therapy, take some.
4. **Do something else.** Find something else to do when you have the urge to smoke (exercise, shower, change your routine, work on a hobby).
5. **Discuss with a friend.** Sometimes just talking about the difficulty you are having will help you deal with cravings.

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Rx Action Steps

If you are having withdrawal symptoms and you would like help, call the quit smoking line. If these withdrawal symptoms are disturbing to you, call your health care provider. Talk to your health care provider to find out if you are eligible to use medications or nicotine replacement products to help you quit.

- ✓ Find a local cessation program by visiting <http://www.quitnet.com/library/programs/>.
- ✓ Call 1-800-QUITNOW (1-800-784-8669) for telephone counseling and information about quitting in your state.
- ✓ Don't give up, keep trying.

Health Care Provider's Contact Numbers/ E-mail Address:
