



STAYING A NON-SMOKER

Quitting smoking at any age will result in major and immediate health benefits. There are three stages to the smoking process. The first stage is deciding to quit, the second is actually quitting, and the third is staying a non-smoker. Relapse is most likely to happen in the first two weeks.

There are many things you can do to help you stay a non-smoker.

STAYING QUIT

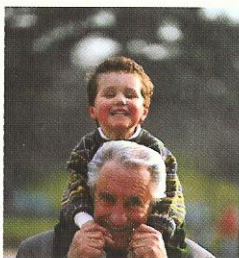
The key to staying a non-smoker is learning how to deal with situations that make you feel like smoking, these include:

- **Stress** – you don't need a cigarette to get through stressful times (see *Relaxation Techniques* Fact Card)
- **Boredom** – take up a hobby, better still start some light exercise
- **Social situations** – try to avoid situations where you may be tempted
- **Habit** – learn to distract yourself
- **Weight gain** – just because you have stopped smoking does not mean you will put on weight. (See *Weight & Health* Fact Card)
- **Withdrawal symptoms** – nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) can help.

STAYING MOTIVATED

Think about the benefits of quitting:

- After 2 hours the nicotine is out of your body
- After 6 hours your heart rate slows down and your blood pressure drops slightly
- After 12 hours the carbon monoxide is out of your lungs and your lungs will work better
- In about 2 days all of the nicotine by-products will have gone from your body
- After 2 days your taste buds come alive, and your sense of smell will start to improve
- Your general fitness will also start to improve



- Your immune system will become stronger and better able to fight infection
- After 12 months your risk of heart disease is almost halved
- In a few years the risk of lung cancer reduces
- Think about the financial benefit (\$2,500 a year if you smoked 25 cigarettes a day).

CRAVINGS

If you start to crave a cigarette, try the following:

- Ask yourself "Do I really want to smoke?"
- Repeat to yourself "I do not need a cigarette, this urge will pass."
- Think about all of the benefits of why you decided to quit.
- Repeat your reasons for quitting in the first place. Write them down, and read over them if you feel the urge to smoke.
- Talk to a friend or relative and get support to help you through.
- Leave the environment you are in, and do something different.
- Try exercising for a few minutes to take your mind off smoking (See *Exercise and the Heart* Fact Card).

If you are having a difficult time staying quit, you may benefit from a special smoking cessation support group. There is a link between the amount of support you get when quitting and staying quit.

NICOTINE REPLACEMENT THERAPY (NRT)

- You do not have to go 'cold turkey' to quit smoking. NRT can assist you to quit.
- NRT replaces some of the nicotine you crave when you stop smoking. This allows you to concentrate on overcoming the habitual situations that tempt you to smoke.
- NRT helps reduce your body's need for nicotine and eases withdrawal symptoms.
- NRT comes as skin patches, chewing gum or an oral inhaler and is available from your pharmacy without a prescription.
- Using NRT can increase your chance of quitting successfully. Support kits and programs available with some NRT give you even more help to quit.
- Talk to your pharmacist to see if NRT is suitable for you. Remember to tell them if you are taking any other medicines or have other conditions, such as heart disease.

MEDICINES

Bupropion hydrochloride

Bupropion hydrochloride is a non-nicotine medicine that can be prescribed by your doctor as a short-term treatment to help you stop smoking.

It's not known exactly how bupropion works, but it is believed that it interacts with chemicals called noradrenaline and adrenaline in the brain.

For more information talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

SET BACKS

Don't be disheartened by any setbacks. A set back is not an excuse to start smoking again. It is however a sign that there are still some situations in which you are not completely

comfortable and in control. Try the following tips:

- Try to work out why you started to smoke again. What was the trigger? How were you feeling at the time?
- Use your answers to prepare for the next time you are tempted to smoke.
- Don't waste time and energy feeling guilty. Work out how to avoid setbacks and move on to the positive – this time you will stay quit.

SELF CARE

- Eat more fruit and vegetables (e.g. munch carrots, celery and dried fruit)
- Foods such as citrus fruit can reduce cravings
- Chew low-joule gum and suck lozenges
- Increase activity e.g. take a regular walk, 30 minutes 3 times a week
- Avoid smoking situations and seek the company of non-smokers
- Avoid alcohol and situations that may trigger you to smoke - at least for the first couple of weeks
- Be single minded about not smoking – be determined and strong
- Take up hobbies that make you forget smoking
- Spend some of the extra money you've saved by not smoking!

Don't give up on your plan to quit.

Other Fact Cards of interest

- *Relaxation Techniques*
- *Smoking*
- *Weight & Health*
- *Exercise and the Heart*

Contact

Your doctor – listed under Medical Practitioners in the yellow pages of the phone book

Your State Quit office. Phone Quitline 131 848

Your Self Care pharmacist. To find: (02) 6283 4777

In case of poisoning, phone the **Poisons Information Centre** on 131 126 from anywhere in Australia. Pharmacists are medicines experts.

Your **Self Care** Pharmacist

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