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Smoking Cessation

Smoking

Smoking is the single most preventable cause of death and illness in the United States, and tobacco is responsible for nearly 1 of 5 deaths in the U.S. Peer influence to start smoking is strongest among adolescents, and 89% of people who ever try a cigarette, try by the age of 18. Those who smoke as few as three cigarettes a day will become regular smokers.

Smoking Addiction

Nicotine is the addictive component of tobacco. About 25% of the nicotine inhaled when smoking a cigarette enters the circulation and reaches the brain within 15 seconds. The risk of becoming addicted to nicotine is between 1:3 to 1:2. This risk is nearly twice the risk of becoming addicted to cocaine, which is 1:4. The time to the first daily cigarette is the single best indication of nicotine dependence.

Smoking Cessation

People who successfully quit smoking have often attempted to quit several times. Each attempt to quit allows the smoker to become more attuned to quitting. In essence, they are practicing quitting. So don't look upon yourself as a failure if the first attempt doesn't work. Keep on trying, and when you are fully committed for yourself instead of merely to please others, you will succeed. This is a major life-style change, and it is extremely important that you have a strong support system of family, friends, and coworkers who will applaud your efforts and your success.

Smoking Cessation Aids

There are many forms of smoking cessation aids available, from nicotine patches, gum, inhalers, and even nasal sprays. The antidepressant bupropion hydrochloride (Zyban) has been shown to be very effective (40-60%), and when used together with a patch is even more so (70%). You should understand that your lifestyle developed around a smoking habit, and the behaviors of daily living that are associated with smoking need to be changed. This could be something routine such as relaxing after a meal, or drinking a cup of coffee.

Ironically, although nicotine is a stimulant, smoking is often seen as a form of relaxation.

Why Quit?

Health

- 20 minutes after your last cigarette, blood pressure and heart rate return to normal, and the body temperature in your hands and feet increases.
- 24 hours after your last cigarette, the chance of a heart attack decreases dramatically.
- 48 hours after your last cigarette, nerve endings start to regrow, and the ability to smell and taste improves.
- 2 weeks to 3 months after your last cigarette, circulation improves and lung function increases up to 30%.
- At 5 years, lung cancer rate drops by 50%

Wealth:

- If you quit smoking cigarettes and saved the money for three years, you will have accumulated enough money to purchase a car.
- The cost of cigarettes placed in a 10% annuity could amount to a small retirement fund.

Suggestions for Quitting

Cut Back

- Week 1 – Remove one cigarette from the pack daily
- Week 2 – Remove two each day
- Week 3 - Remove 4 each day
- Week 4 – Remove 6 each day
- Continue decreasing the allowable cigarettes daily until you have five left in the pack per day. Then throw away the cigarettes and use a nicotine aid – patch, gum, lozenge, inhaler or spray.

Delay the urge to smoke for at least 5 minutes, then longer each time you smoke.

Drink Water

Do something else. Distract yourself, walk, call a friend, go to a smoke free public place.

Deep Breathing – Take 10 slow deep breaths, close your eyes, relax.

Discuss your thoughts, feelings with someone else.

Distance yourself from those who encourage you to smoke. Surround yourself with supportive people.

The American Cancer Society Quit-line has counselors available to give you encouragement and sound advice for successfully quitting. Call them at: 1-877-YES- QUIT (937-7848)