



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

Cigarette smoking is an addiction disorder and the cause of many serious health problems. Among the thousands of chemicals in cigarette smoke are three known substances which are dangerous to the person smoking and to those who breathe in the second-hand smoke. The three are tar, nicotine and carbon monoxide (a poisonous gas). Tar condenses into a sticky substance in the lungs; nicotine is the addictive component of tobacco smoke; and carbon monoxide decreases the oxygen carried by the red blood cells throughout the body. There is overwhelming evidence that anyone who smokes should make every attempt to quit.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Any amount of cigarette smoking. The more one smokes, the greater the health risks. There is no safe level of exposure; someone who smokes occasionally (1 to 4 cigarettes a day) is still at greater risk for health problems than nonsmokers. An average smoker smokes 15 to 20 cigarettes a day.

CAUSES

Tobacco use usually begins as a social behavior and results in significant physical consequences in the body.

RISK INCREASES IN/WITH

- Addictive personality traits such as impulsiveness, difficulty in delaying gratification, sensation-seeking, rebelliousness, weak commitment to social goals, sense of alienation, or low tolerance for stress. Other characteristics are low self-esteem, anxiety and depression, conflicting parental expectations.
- Less education (high school dropouts are more likely to smoke than college graduates).
- Lower socioeconomic group.
- Ages 25 to 44 have highest smoking rates.
- Blue collar occupation group.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Education about health risks.
- Smoking restrictions in the workplace and other public facilities.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

For discontinuing smoking:

- It is never too late to quit. Discontinuing smoking can reverse the majority of health risks, some within one year, others within 10 to 15 years.
- Smoking cessation will bring improved quality of life: Food tastes better, fresher breath, less coughing, more money, increased stamina, happier family and friends, improved mental health.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

For continued smoking:

- Cancer of the lung, esophagus, pancreas, bladder, mouth, larynx or cervix.
- Heart and cardiovascular disease including heart attacks and sudden death; coronary artery disease; hypertension; stroke. Oral contraceptive use compounds risk of cardiovascular disease.
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).
- More prominent skin wrinkling.
- Problems with infertility; numerous risks of complications in

pregnancy, and possible threats to the health of a newborn.

- Earlier menopause and possible osteoporosis.
- Second hand smoke is harmful to anyone around the smoker.
- Residential fire deaths (majority are caused by smoking).



TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- The majority of smokers who quit do it on their own; others are helped by a variety of methods. No one way works for everyone.
- Self-help steps in quitting:
 - 1) Analyze your smoking habits by determining when and why you smoke.
 - 2) Make up your mind to quit.
 - 3) Choose the day and quit on that day.
 - 4) Use any kind of substitute (gum, hard candy). Give up those activities temporarily that you associate with smoking.
 - 5) Reward yourself for not smoking (buy something special).
 - 6) During the first few weeks, eat plenty of low-calorie snacks; drink lots of water.
- For help in quitting, check with the local office of the American Cancer Society or The American Lung Association. Website help: American Lung Association www.lungusa.org; American Heart Association www.americanheart.org; American Cancer Society www.cancer.org; National Cancer Institute cis.nci.nih.gov.
- Join a support group or a formal smoking cessation program.
- Try out other ideas such as hypnosis or acupuncture.
- Concerns about quitting:
 - 1) Weight gain—average amount is 5 to 8 pounds over 5 years (for some, there is no weight gain); the extra weight is not a health threat.
 - 2) Stress—know in advance it may occur; get counseling or help with stress management.
 - 3) Withdrawal—physical symptoms subside in about 10 to 14 days; psychologic symptoms may persist for months or longer.
 - 4) Fear of failure—relapse is common; if it happens, try again immediately. Many people have had to try more than once and by more than one method.

MEDICATION

- Stop-smoking aids include nicotine gum, transdermal nicotine patches, lung inhaler and a nasal spray. The idea of this therapy is to provide nicotine in a form other than a cigarette so as to minimize the symptoms of withdrawal. There are side effects associated with these aids, so be sure you discuss the risks and benefits with the doctor. These aids are to be used in conjunction with counseling or a smoking-cessation program.
- Bupropion (Zyban), an antidepressant may be prescribed.

ACTIVITY

Establish a regular exercise routine. It will help control weight, combat restlessness, help break up old routines, and make you feel better mentally and physically. Lung capacity improves when smoking is discontinued, so there is less shortness of breath.

DIET

Metabolism rate tends to slow after quitting and a weight gain may occur. Low calorie snacks are recommended to replace the oral sensation of smoking.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

You or a family member is a cigarette smoker and wants help in quitting.