

Tobacco Cessation: How to Change?

To effectively change your tobacco use, consider all of the factors that contribute to using tobacco. It can be helpful to group these factors into three main categories: physical factors, habits, and psychological factors (i.e., your thoughts and emotions).

Physically, nicotine is one of the most addictive substances on the planet. Your medical provider will tell you whether it is appropriate for you to use a nicotine replacement product such as the patch or gum. Some medications, like Zyban, are great at helping reduce nicotine cravings for some people but not others. Sometimes, Primary Care Providers (PCPs) recommend combining nicotine replacement products with prescription medications. Which treatment option is best for you? It is important to work closely with your PCP to choose the best medication or combination of medications for you. These products have been proven to help people quit and people who use medication have much higher rates of success in quitting.

Behaviorally, you will need to change your habits and modify the situations that you typically associate with tobacco. Your BHC can help you learn skills and techniques that increase your chances of choosing alternatives to tobacco. Practical counseling and support are available to help you through this process. This counseling can help you recognize situations that tempt you to use tobacco, learn to problem-solve, and learn to develop skills to cope with these situations. Even brief counseling greatly increases the success of a quit attempt. The BHCs in your primary care clinic can assist you with these changes. Also, if you prefer telephone counseling, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) to get connected to your state telephone quit line.

Thoughts and emotions are some of the hardest aspects of tobacco use to change. Often, individuals think that they need tobacco to get through a difficult situation. Changing these thoughts to cope with stress and negative emotions is an essential aspect of successful tobacco cessation. One helpful strategy is to list your top 3 reasons for quitting and to remind yourself of these reasons periodically as a way to resist the urge to use tobacco. Take a moment to list *your* main reasons for quitting:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Preparing to Quit

Your Quit Date

When is the last day and time that you are going to use tobacco?

Month_____ Day_____ Year_____ Time_____

Preparing Your Surroundings

What are the things that remind you to use tobacco? It is important to change your surroundings so that you won't be reminded about tobacco use as frequently. Before your quit date consider the following:

- Don't buy tobacco in bulk (e.g., don't buy cartons).
- Find all of your hidden stashes of tobacco. Check in the couch, the glove compartment, in your drawers at home and at work. It is unwise to keep an emergency stash once you quit.
- Get rid of tobacco-related materials like ashtrays and lighters. You may need lighters for candles or fireplaces, but you likely don't need to carry lighters wherever you go.
- Prepare family and friends. Let them know that you are planning to quit and ask for their help. If you have friends and family who use tobacco, ask them to avoid using it around you.
- Make a plan for coping with cravings and withdrawal symptoms. Use the combination of strategies that works for you.
- Choose a method to quit. There are several ways to consider quitting including: "cold turkey," tapering, and a planned quit date supported with behavioral quit strategies and/or medication (for example nicotine patch) to assist with withdrawal symptoms. Avoid thinking favorably about your last tobacco use. If you remember your tobacco use fondly, then you may be more likely to go back to tobacco use when you perceive that you need it.

Quitting is difficult. Preparing for challenging situations can help you succeed. What do you expect to be the most difficult challenge for you as you quit? For example, will it be going without a cigarette with your morning coffee? Or, will it be not smoking when your spouse or friends light up? Anticipating and having a plan for how to handle these challenges will increase your success.

As you prepare to quit there are other things in your life that you can do a little bit differently that will help you succeed. For example, there may be places you should avoid or things you should do differently. What situations (e.g., bars, sporting events, smoking areas) do you need to **avoid** during the next month to limit your urges to use tobacco? How can you change situations that you can't avoid so that you'll be more successful with your quit attempt {**Alter**}? "When you feel the urge to put tobacco in your mouth what could you use instead" (e.g., gum, hard candies or mints, toothpicks, cinnamon sticks) {**Alternatives**}? "Are there **Activities** (e.g., going for a walk) you can do or ways to keep you busy if you feel an urge to use tobacco?"

Using the Four A's to Outsmart Tobacco Urges

Avoid. What are the situations or places that you need to avoid over the next month?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Alter. What situations will you need to change to help you be more successful?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Alternatives. What can you put in your mouth or hands instead of using tobacco?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Action. When you get an urge to use tobacco, what can you do to be active or busy?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Follow-Up Appointment Plan:

Adapted from Hunter, C. L., Goodie, J. L., Oordt, M. S., & Dobbmeyer, A. C. (2009). *Integrated behavioral health in primary care: Step-by-step guidance for assessment and intervention*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.