

Summertime Quit-Smoking Tips



Summer: A great time to quit smoking for good

Summer is a great time to make healthy lifestyle changes. Longer days provide us with more time to get outside and exercise; we can choose from an abundance of fresh, delicious fruits and vegetables; and most of us are also able to take extra time to relax and rejuvenate our bodies and our minds.

The summer vacation season can also be a perfect time to quit smoking. Here are a few reasons why:

Summer offers a chance for a change in routine: Your summer vacation can be an excellent time to make the break from unhealthy habits you may have developed during your regular work or school life.

Summer may provide you with more time to relax: Many people think that smoking helps them relax, but that is not the case. According to researchers at Dundee University in Scotland, smoking causes physical changes in your brain that inhibit transmission of serotonin, the body's natural stress-relieving hormone. As a result, smokers become deficient in serotonin and may suffer higher levels of stress.¹

Summer may be a great time to control your weight: A lot of smokers, especially young women, believe smoking will help them control their weight.² Many young women are also afraid to quit because they think they will gain weight.³ This is not true. Smokers gain just as much weight as non-smokers in the same age range.⁴

If you are still worried about gaining weight if you quit smoking, consider this:

You can exercise more: The summer provides all sorts of opportunities to get out there and get active no matter what your fitness level! You can walk, cycle, swim, kayak, hike, rollerblade, windsurf and even go mountain climbing!

It is easier to eat and snack on healthy, low-fat foods. Summer offers an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables that are easy to obtain and quick to prepare. What could be more refreshing than a plate of fresh seasonal fruit such as strawberries, raspberries or peaches?

You will prevent further skin damage. We all know how important it is to protect our skin from the summer sun. Did you know that smoking also damages your skin? Research has shown that facial wrinkles, while not yet visible, can be seen under a microscope in smokers as young as 20.⁵

Quit tips for the summer

Preparing to quit:

Make a list of the reasons why you want to quit smoking. E.g. You won't need to stop for cigarette breaks when you are on a family road trip. No more standing outside your workplace and smoking in the rain.

Tell everyone that you are quitting and ask for their support. People who have more supports from their friends and family often find it easier to make healthy changes.⁶

Identify your smoking triggers and decide how you will deal with them. For example, if you smoke after meals, get up and go for a walk instead of reaching for a cigarette.

After you quit:

Get out and get active! Spend more time at the park; go for an early morning walk; begin a new outdoor sport such as speed walking or swimming.

Make sure that you manage your stress levels. Take advantage of a more relaxed summertime frame of mind. Relax outside in a hammock, read a good book, stop and smell the roses!

Munch on fresh veggies and fruit to reduce cravings.

Remember that every day you remain a non-smoker you are reducing your risk of heart disease, cancer and lung damage.



Do you need some help?⁷

There are many products available for people who wish to quit smoking. These include nicotine replacement products such as nicotine gum, the nicotine patch, nicotine inhalers and antidepressant medications that reduce withdrawal symptoms.

Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT):

NRT is an effective treatment that has few side effects. NRT can help you control your withdrawal symptoms and cravings by gradually reducing your body's dependence on nicotine.

Nicotine gum: Nicotine gum contains nicotine which is absorbed through your gums and cheeks. Nicotine gum can be effective in helping you cut down on the number of cigarettes you smoke each day.

The patch: NRT is available as a small patch which you wear on your skin. Patches come in different strengths and you will gradually move to lower doses until you no longer need to use them.

Nicotine inhaler: Inhalers can be held between your fingers like a cigarette. Small particles of nicotine are inhaled into the back of the throat where they are absorbed into your body.

Other prescription products: There are several types of medications in pill form that your doctor can prescribe which may reduce your withdrawal symptoms. These medications can be used in combination with NRT.

Have you quit and failed in the past?

Take comfort in the fact that the more times you try to quit, the more likely you are to be successful the next time you try. Just because you may have failed in the past does not mean you will fail the next time.⁸

For more on quitting smoking check out the fact sheet: **Helping Someone Quit Smoking.**

¹ Balfour DJK. The neurobiology of tobacco dependence: A preclinical perspective on the role of the dopamine projections to the nucleus. *Nicotine and Tobacco Research* 2004;6:899-912. Accessed February 20, 2008 from <http://www.informaworld.com/smp/cont~content=a713726746~db=all>

² Delnevo CD, Hrywna M, Abatemarco DJ, Lewis MJ. Relationships between cigarette smoking and weight control in young women. *Family & Community Health*. 2003;26:140-6.

³ Cawley J, Markowitz S, Tauras J. Lighting up and slimming down: the effects of body weight and cigarette prices on adolescent smoking initiation. *Journal of Health Economics*. 2004;23:293-311.

⁴ Klesges RC, Ward KD, Ray JW, Cutter G, Jacobs DR, Wagenknecht LE. The prospective relationships between smoking and weight in a young, biracial cohort: The coronary artery risk development in young adults study. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*. 1998;66(6):987-993. Accessed February 20, 2008 from <http://content.apa.org/journals/ccp/66/6/987>

⁵ Koh JS, Kang H, Choi SW, Hyung O. Cigarette smoking associated with premature facial wrinkling: image analysis of facial skin replicas. *International Journal of Dermatology*. 2002;41(1):21-27.

⁶ Park EW, Tudiver F, Schultz JK, Campbell T. Does enhancing partner support and interaction improve smoking cessation? A meta-analysis. *Annals of Family Medicine*. 2004;2:170-174. Accessed February 22, 2008 from <http://www.annfammed.org/cgi/content/full/2/2/170>

May S, West R, Hajek P, McEwen A, McRobbie H. Randomized controlled trial of a social support ('buddy') intervention for smoking cessation. *Patient Educ Couns*. 2006;64(1-3):235-41. Accessed February 26, 2008 from http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16616450?ordinalpos=5&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed_ResultsPanel.Pubmed_RVDocSum

⁷ This material is adapted from Canadian Cancer Society Smokers Helpline. *Guide for Smokers Who Want to Quit*. 2007. Accessed February 28, 2008 from http://www.cancer.ca/vgn/images/portal/cit_86751114/8/18/19086006950SAAT-Want_En_Booklet_2007.pdf

⁸ The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services website. *Help for Smokers: Ideas to help you quit*. Accessed March 7, 2008 from <http://www.ahrq.gov/consumer/helpsmok.htm>

To learn more about how to get up, go out and be SummerActive, visit www.summeractive.ca – you could win great prizes!