



# Knowing what to expect when you quit smoking

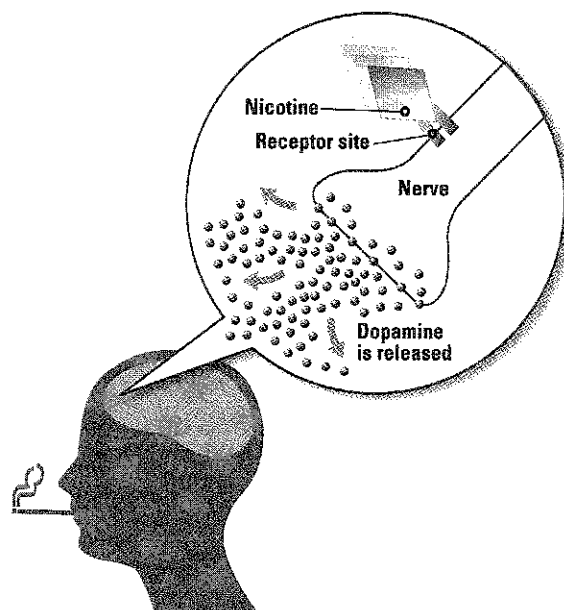
Congratulations! You've made a great decision to quit smoking. We know quitting isn't easy, but being prepared may help. You may experience urges to smoke and other nicotine withdrawal symptoms after you quit. Knowing what to expect may help you stick to your goal. Use this activity sheet to get the facts.

## Why smokers experience nicotine withdrawal

When you smoke, nicotine reaches the brain in about 10 to 20 seconds. This causes a chemical called dopamine to be released in the brain. Dopamine provides a feeling of pleasure. Over time, if you're a smoker, you may become addicted to nicotine.

For most smokers, smoking is more than just a habit. It is an addiction. And as with most addictions, when you take away the thing that you're addicted to, you may experience physical withdrawal symptoms. When you quit smoking, it's no different. You take away the nicotine, and that may cause your body to go through nicotine withdrawal symptoms. It can be tough, but the symptoms can lessen over time.

Remember, if you do slip up and smoke, don't give up. A slip-up isn't a failure. It doesn't have to be a relapse.



## Common signs of nicotine withdrawal

The symptoms may be different for everyone, but here's what to look for:

- Urge to smoke
- Depressed mood
- Insomnia
- Irritability, frustration, or anger
- Anxiety
- Difficulty concentrating
- Restlessness
- Decreased heart rate
- Increased appetite or weight gain

And don't forget, no matter how tough nicotine withdrawal symptoms may seem at first, they can lessen over time. Until then, think of the symptoms as a sign that your body is cleansing itself of nicotine — and that's a positive thing. Make a follow-up appointment with your doctor to discuss your progress and any withdrawal symptoms you may be experiencing.

*Find out more*

about what it takes to give up cigarettes for good.

Visit [www.mytimetoquit.com](http://www.mytimetoquit.com) today.

## When do you feel the urge to smoke?

The urge to smoke may also be a habit linked to a daily activity. And identifying those situations may help you prepare for urges before they happen. Take a look at the lists below. Identify your smoking risk situations in the left column. Then, choose a quit strategy from the right column.

SITUATION	QUIT STRATEGY	CHOOSE A QUIT STRATEGY
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mealtimes, or just after a meal	<u>Do something active</u>	Talk it out. Go somewhere you can't smoke. Switch up your routine. Take a shower. Take several deep breaths. Do something active. Leave the situation. Meditate. Visualize the future. Keep your mouth busy. Carry a water bottle/drink water. Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> When I get home from work	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Watching TV or listening to the radio	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Talking on the phone	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Having a cup of coffee or tea	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/> When I first wake up	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Having a drink	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Being with other smokers	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/> When someone offers me a cigarette	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Feeling stressed	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	_____	

## Make a plan to quit smoking

Everyone's experience with nicotine withdrawal symptoms is different. So, it's important to recognize when you're experiencing them. That makes it easier to understand that nicotine withdrawal symptoms can be a normal part of the quitting process. Then you can make a plan to deal with them. As you get on the path to quitting smoking, following these three steps may help:

- 1 **Recognize your risk situations.**  
 Try to understand the situations that put you at risk for smoking after you've quit. Then, think about how you could use your quit strategies from above to deal with them.
- 2 **Build a support network.**  
 First, set a quit date. Then, let your closest friends and family know you're quitting. It may help you stick to your goal.
- 3 **Sign up for a quit-smoking support plan.**  
 Get expert advice and support. It can teach you how to change the way you think about and act on smoking. So when you're faced with an urge, you'll be better prepared for it.

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