

Tips for quitting smoking

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Looking for advice to help you quit smoking? The Irish Cancer Society give you lots of hints and tips to stop smoking.

Research shows that 70% of smokers want to quit – so you're not alone.

We know quitting smoking can be difficult. It's also a different experience for every smoker: some people succeed on the first try; others try many times before they quit for good.

If you're thinking about quitting, or you'd like to help a friend or family member to do so, there is help at hand!

1. PREPARE TO QUIT

Jot down your reasons for stopping (like making your home or car smokefree home) and keep them close at hand. Weigh up the pros and cons.

2. PICK A DATE

Most people who successfully quit smoking do so by stopping altogether and not by gradually cutting down. Pick your day to stop smoking and stick to it.

3. GET SUPPORT

Get moral support from family or friends. Sometimes it's helpful if a friend, family member or colleague quits with you. Talk to your GP for support or call the HSE Quit Team on Freephone 1800 201 203.

4. CHANGE YOUR ROUTINE

Smoking is often linked to certain times and situations such as the first smoke in the morning, drinking coffee or alcohol. These are called your 'triggers'. Replace these triggers with new activities that you don't link with smoking. For example, if you always had a cigarette with cups of coffee switch to tea or fruit juice instead.

5. INCREASE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Regular exercise contributes to good health. It helps to manage weight and can also improve the body's ability to meet the demands and stresses of daily living.

6. DON'T BE WORRIED ABOUT WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS

You may experience withdrawal symptoms once you stop smoking. These are very positive signs: they mean your body is recovering from the effects of tobacco. Common symptoms include coughing, irritability, and fitful sleep. Don't worry, they are all perfectly normal and should disappear within a few weeks.

7. DEAL WITH CRAVINGS

Cravings can occur frequently during the first few days after stopping smoking. A craving increase in intensity over a period of three to five minutes and then begins to subside.

Delay at least three minutes and the urge will pass

Drink a glass of water or fruit juice (sip slowly)

Distract yourself: Move away from the situation

Deep Breath: Take a deep breath. Breathe slowly and deeply. It will help you to relax.

Some smokers also find smoking-cessation aids useful – available from your pharmacy.

8. COUNT THE SAVINGS

Put away the amount of money you would normally spend on tobacco. Work out how much you spend on cigarettes per week, month and year. Then watch your savings grow.

9. WATCH WHAT YOU EAT

If you're worried about gaining weight, be extra careful with your diet. Avoid snacking on chocolate bars and biscuits; try some fruit or sugar free gum or popcorn instead.

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH CRAVINGS – THE 4 DS

10. TAKE ONE DAY AT A TIME

It may take a little while to get used to being without cigarettes. Remember, every day without a cigarette is good news for your health, your family and your pocket.

CALL THE HSE QUIT TEAM

There is help available if you smoke and would like to stop.

Call the Quit Team on Freephone 1800 201 203 or 'or freetext the word QUIT to 50100.

(Source: Irish Cancer Society website)