

Smoking Cessation

Are you or someone you love wanting to quit smoking? Have you tried before and failed? Please don't give up. Most people who have successfully quit smoking do not do it on their first try.

Maybe you believe it is too late to stop now, that the damage has already occurred. The truth is, as soon as you quit, things start to improve. Even just a few days after you quit, your risk of a heart attack starts decreasing. You may find you aren't short of breath going up those stairs anymore. Within a few months even your circulation begins to improve.



Some people can just say they are quitting and they do so. Perhaps they just have a smoking habit, not a true addiction. Lucky them. For those who are truly addicted, it may be a bit easier to follow the 4 phases of quitting.

Phase I is "Preparing to Quit". I have a few handbooks that could help with that. Look for them on the counter in the foyer. It will guide you through helping you learn who you smoke, identify your triggers, make some changes in your lifestyle that could help you break away from the cigarettes.



Phase 2 is "Choosing Your Quit Date". That quit date is a big day! The workbook will give you tips right down to what you can do the day before and the day after to help you through it.

Phase 3 is "Coping With Withdrawal". This is the tough part. You may suffer from irritability, headaches and other reactions. This will take courage and perseverance to manage but you can do it! This could last 1-3 weeks. That is a long time to be miserable, but not so long if you consider a lifetime of suffering from the effects of the cigarettes. The workbook guides you through ways to manage this part, medications that could help, tips to avoiding slips, etc.

Phase 4 is "Fighting Slips and Relapses". During this phase you are going to be learning and practicing new, healthy habits. Also during this phase you will be marveling at the improvements you start to notice in your body.



As with all addictions, there may be slips and relapses. A slip would mean you smoked after your quit date. It doesn't mean you give up; it just means you have to get back on track. A relapse means you return to full-time smoking after trying to quit. This happens. It can be disheartening but it doesn't have to mean you've failed. It means you start again and pursue your goal with fresh determination.

If you are a smoker, know that we aren't judging you, we are cheering for you. Please feel free to take one of the "Quitting for Life Self-Care Handbooks" on the counter in the foyer. I can order more from the Will Rogers Institute if we need them. You could also check out their website, www.wr.institute.org. Another resource is www.smokefree.gov. As always, your primary care provider can be a great source of information and help as well.



If there is any way I can be of help or any information you'd like me to pursue, let me know.

Sue Struck, RN

