
a series of fact sheets written
by experts in the field of liver
disease

HCV Wellness:

Tips for Quitting Smoking

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- 1) Gather information** – There are many tools available to help you stop smoking. To find some, see HCSP’s Factsheet *HCV and Wellness: Smoking Cessation Resources* at www.hcvadvocate.org
- 2) Talk to your medical provider** – Tobacco dependence is a medical problem for which there is medical help. If your doctor or nurse cannot help you, ask for a referral to a specialist. There are many tools to use to manage withdrawal, such as medications and Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT - patches, gum, nasal spray, etc.). Your medical insurance (including publicly funded ones, such as Medi-Cal) may pay for what you need to stop smoking.
- 3) Make a plan** – The slogan “failing to plan is planning to fail” applies to smoking.
- 4) Choose a quit day** – Pick a day that will boost your chances of success. For instance, some people smoke less at work, so a workday may be better than the weekend for quitting. The opposite pattern is true for others. Do not wait until you feel like it, or that may never happen.
- 5) Join a smoking cessation program** – Most states have programs. Find a program that fits your style, such as telephone or in-person counseling, Internet programs, groups, etc. The National Institutes’ Smoking Quitline offers help. Call 1-877-44U-QUIT (1-877-448-7848). You can also call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669). Other programs can be found through your health insurance, employer, medical provider and pharmacist.
- 6) Make a list of reasons to quit** – Keep this list in various places to remind yourself of the value of smoking cessation.
- 7) Enlist support** – Ask your family, friends, and coworkers to help you during this time. This is especially important if any of these people are smokers. You can ask a fellow smoker to quit with you.
- 8) Keep an open mind** – Research suggests that the smokers who are most likely to quit permanently are those who use multiple smoking cessation tools and use these simultaneously.
- 9) Think positively** – Tell yourself you will accomplish this. Picture yourself as a healthy and happy non-smoker.
- 10) Know your triggers** – Knowing what tempts you to smoke may help you avoid these temptations, especially if you have developed coping strategies beforehand.
- 11) Make a plan for managing triggers** – Stay away from bars or restaurants that allow smoking; ask your smoking friends not to smoke around you; carry sugar-free gum; put a straw, sugar-free lollipop, toothpick, cinnamon or carrot stick in your mouth; keep your hands busy (knitting, doodling, holding a squeeze ball, etc.).
- 12) Breathe** – Take deep, slow inhalations and exhalations throughout your day.

13) Exercise – A short walk is a good way to quiet a nicotine urge and prevent weight gain.

14) Drink lots of water – This will help remove smoking-related toxins from your body.

15) Expect this to be challenging – If quitting smoking were easy, the 80% of smokers who say they want to quit, would have. Expect to experience withdrawal. Expect to be tempted. Expect to be “caught off guard.” Make a plan before you quit smoking on how you will conquer these challenges.

16) Stick with the winners – Associate with people who have been successful quitters. Ask them for tips and support.

17) Clean - Remove cigarettes, matches, lighters and ashtrays from your environment. Get your teeth cleaned soon after you quit. Put potpourri, cloves, or cinnamon in your car’s ashtray. Wash your clothes. Clean the house and freshen it up.

18) Reward yourself – Reinforce your efforts by rewarding yourself. Do something nice for yourself every day. Plan something special for each week, month, and year you quit.

19) Practice total abstinence from tobacco – A single puff is all it takes to undo your valiant efforts.

20) If you do slip, get back on track – A slip does not mean you have to start again. Skip the guilt. However, do not tell yourself that a slip means you can smoke again. Learn from it, formulate a new plan or strengthen the old one, and recommit yourself. The average smoker had 5 to 7 attempts before successfully quitting for good.


Be Sure to Check Out All the Other Factsheets in this Series:

- Encouraging Words for Difficult Times
- Facts and Fiction about Smoking
- Facts for Smokers with HCV
- Flu Shots
- Immunizations for Adults
- Influenza
- Living with Hepatitis C: Managing Common Symptoms
- Meditation
- Rewards and Affirmations for Quitting Smoking
- Smoking Cessation Resources
- Stress Reduction
- Tips for Quitting Smoking

For more information about hepatitis C, hepatitis B and HCV coinfections, please visit www.hcvadvocate.org.

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