**Preparation**



Smoking Information Sheet:

How to Quit



Deciding to quit smoking may be the most difficult decision smokers will ever have to make in their lives. However, it is also the healthiest one. Smokers will often say, “Don’t tell me why I should quit, tell me HOW.” There’s no right way, but there are certainly a few key elements:

* Making the decision to quit
* Setting a quit date and choosing a quit plan
* Accepting withdrawal
* Staying quit - maintenance

Picking and Preparing for Your Quit Day

Once you’ve decided to quit, you’re ready to set a date. It’s best to choose a day within the month you make your decision. Picking a date too far away allows too much time for you to change your mind. You may choose a date that has special meaning (birthday, anniversary, the Great American Smokeout, etc.) Or it could be completely random. Circle the date on your calendar. \* Remember that if you are quitting with the help of a prescription, you will need to talk to your doctor about getting it in time.

On Your Quit Day…

* DO NOT SMOKE! (Not even one puff!)
* Keep active
* Stock up on oral substitutes (gum, hard candy, carrot sticks, coffee stirrers, straws, toothpicks, etc)
* Get rid of all the cigarettes and ashtrays in your home, car, and office

Dealing With and Accepting Withdrawal

Withdrawal from nicotine has 2 parts: physical and mental. The physical symptoms, while annoying, are not life-threatening. However, most smokers find that the mental aspect of quitting is more difficult. If you’ve been smoking for any length of time, smoking has become linked with almost everything you do: waking up, eating, reading, watching TV, etc. So it will take time to stop associating smoking with these activities. This is why you will have strong urges to smoke.

One way to overcome these urges is to identify rationalizations as they enter your mind. A rationalization is a mistake thought that seems to make sense to you at the time, but it is not based on reality. The following are common rationalizations of smokers:

* “I’ll just have one to get through this rough spot.”
* “Today’s not a good day. I’ll quit tomorrow.”
* “You’ve gotta die of something.”
* “How bad is it, really? Uncle Harry smoked his whole life and lived to be over 90.”

It’s helpful to write down rationalizations as you think of them and recognize that they are messages that can trick you into going back to smoking. Use these ideas to help you stay committed:

* *Avoid temptation*. Stay away from people and places where you are tempted to smoke. As you progress, you will be able to handle these situations with confidence.
* *Change your habits*. Switch to juice and water instead of alcohol or coffee. Take a different way to work. Talk a walk instead of a coffee break.
* *Practice deep breathing*. When you were smoking, you breathed deeply as you inhaled the smoke. When the urge strikes now, breathe deeply but visualize your lungs filling with clean, fresh air.

Remind yourself of your reasons for quitting and the benefits you’ll gain as an ex-smoker.