



# It's time to kick some butts!



## When it comes to smoking, be a quitter

Quitting smoking is the most important thing smokers can do to live a longer, healthier life.<sup>1</sup> Yet almost one in every five American adults smoke.<sup>2</sup>

## You're not weak, you're addicted

If you've tried to stop smoking and always seem to pick it up again, you're not alone. Nicotine, the drug in tobacco, is as addictive as heroin or cocaine. When you breathe in cigarette smoke, the inhaled nicotine reaches your brain even faster than drugs taken through a needle.<sup>1</sup> Smoking, and the chemicals in tobacco products, affect the heart and blood vessels, your hormones, your respiratory system, your metabolism and your brain. And if you are a woman who is pregnant, nicotine affects your baby in the same ways.

A smoker who tries to quit faces up to a few weeks of withdrawal. The physical addiction to nicotine is in full force after just a few weeks of smoking. But also, there is a mental addiction to the habit of smoking. Both types of addiction have to be tackled when someone quits smoking.

## Making it through the cravings

Between the withdrawal symptoms and the challenge of breaking a habit, it's no wonder many smokers have a hard time quitting. Here are some ways to cope:<sup>3,4</sup>

- **Take a brisk walk.** Even a five- or 10-minute walk can help you through your craving and withdrawal symptoms. It can also triple the amount of time it takes for your next craving to hit.
- **Spend time in places where you can't smoke.** Try the library, museums, bookstores and malls.
- **Change other habits too.** If you used to smoke when you watched TV, unplug the TV set. If you had to smoke with your morning coffee, have tea instead. Make plans to do something you enjoy when you would have smoked your favorite cigarettes of the day – take a walk outdoors, call a friend, take a bath or play a game. If you change your routine, you are less likely to feel something is missing.

## The symptoms of nicotine withdrawal include:<sup>1</sup>

- Dizziness (for the first day or two)
- Depression
- Feeling frustrated or angry
- Trouble focusing
- Feeling really tired
- Headache
- Trouble sleeping and bad dreams
- Nausea or hunger
- Anxiety and irritability

Call 800-QUIT-NOW for help.



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Sources

<sup>1</sup> American Cancer Society website: Guide to Quitting Smoking (accessed March 2015); cancer.org

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: Smoking & Tobacco Use Fast Facts (accessed March 2015); odc.gov/tobacco/data\_statistics/fast\_facts/fast\_facts/

<sup>3</sup> Taylor, Adrian H., Michael H. Ussher and Guy Faulkner. "The acute effects of exercise on cigarette cravings, withdrawal symptoms, affect and smoking behaviour: a systematic review." *Addiction* 102 (2007): 534-43

<sup>4</sup> Mayo Clinic website: Quit Smoking (accessed March 2015); mayoclinic.org

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