

National Cancer Institute



Clearing the Air

QUIT SMOKING
TODAY

U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES

National Institutes
of Health

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Introduction

From those of us at the National Cancer Institute: Congratulations! You are taking the first step to quitting cigarette smoking.

We wrote this booklet with the help of ex-smokers and experts. It can help you prepare to quit and support you in the days and weeks after you quit. It also describes problems to expect when you quit. Being prepared can help you through the hard times.

Many tips are offered in this booklet—choose what works best for you. You can quit for good, even if you've tried before. In fact, most smokers try to quit many times before they succeed.

Stay upbeat. Keep trying. Use what you learn each step of the way until you quit for good. Soon, you too will be an ex-smoker.

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) is part of the National Institutes of Health, one of 11 agencies in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NCI is the U.S. Government's principal agency for cancer research and training.



Before you

START a Smoke-Free Life

Quitting is hard

Many ex-smokers say quitting was the hardest thing they ever did.

Do you feel hooked? You're probably addicted to nicotine. Nicotine is in all tobacco products. It makes you feel calm and satisfied, yet also alert and focused. But the more you smoke, the more nicotine you need to feel good. Soon, you don't feel "normal" without nicotine. This is nicotine addiction.

It takes time to break free from nicotine addiction. It may take more than one try to quit for good. So don't give up too soon. You *will* feel good again.

Quitting is also hard because smoking is a big part of your life. You may enjoy holding a cigarette and puffing on it. You may smoke when you are stressed, bored, or angry. You may light up when you drink coffee or alcohol, talk on the phone, drive, or are with other smokers. After months and years, smoking has become part of your daily routine. You may light up without even thinking about it.

Quitting isn't easy. Just reading this booklet won't do it. You may try to quit several times before you're finally done with cigarettes. But you will learn something each time you try. It takes willpower and strength to beat your addiction to nicotine. Remember that millions of people have quit smoking for good. You can be one of them.

Just thinking about quitting may make you anxious. But your chances will be better if you get ready first. Quitting works best when you're prepared.