

Why Do You Smoke?

Learning why you smoke
can help you quit



Marshfield Clinic[®]

..... Don't just live. Shine.

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To help you take the steps you need to quit smoking, this booklet contains:

- Information on reasons people smoke
- Questions to answer about why you smoke
- Tips to satisfy your needs without tobacco – and **quit for good**

This booklet focuses on cigarette smoking. However, the content of information can be applied to all forms of tobacco, including smokeless tobacco use, cigar smoking, and pipe smoking.

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Why Do You Smoke?

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Smokers use tobacco to fill many needs. Studies show that most people smoke for one or more of the following reasons:

- Smoking gives me more energy.
- I like to touch and handle cigarettes.
- Smoking is a pleasure.
- Smoking helps me relax when I am tense, upset, or depressed.
- I crave cigarettes; it is an addiction.
- Smoking is a habit, a ritual.
- Smoking relieves my boredom and loneliness.
- Smoking helps control my weight.
- Smoking helps me fit in with other people.
- Smoking gives me a sense of control; I feel like I'm "living on the edge"!

Understanding which needs smoking fills for you is important if you want to quit. Finding other ways to meet these needs can make it easier to give up tobacco.

Smokers may find they smoke for more than one of the ten reasons. If this is true for you, try the tips suggested under each group that apply to you.

If you do not score high on any of the reasons, chances are that you do not smoke very much or have for a long time. Giving up smoking for good may be easier for you.

Reason #1: Smoking gives me more energy

If you answer “often” or “sometimes” to the following questions, this is one reason you smoke.

	Often	Sometimes	Never
I smoke to keep from slowing down.			
I reach for a cigarette when I need a lift.			
When I am tired, smoking perks me up.			
Smoking helps me stay on the “cutting edge” of things.			

Many people use tobacco like they use coffee or soft drinks: to help them wake up, get moving, keep going when they feel worn out, to make them feel “on top of things”. The nicotine in tobacco, like the caffeine in coffee and many soft drinks, is a drug which causes stimulation of the body. You can find other ways to get more energy. The following tips can help.

Tips to help you quit

- **Get enough rest.** With a good night’s sleep, you are more likely to feel fresh and alert.
- **Exercise regularly.** Regular exercise raises your overall energy level, so you may feel less need for a boost.
- **Move.** Take a brisk walk instead of smoking if you start feeling sluggish. Moving around is a drug-free stimulant.
- **Eat regular, nutritious meals.** Healthful foods are a great natural source of energy.
- **Drink lots of cold water.** It will refresh you as it helps clear your body of nicotine.
- **Keep your mind active.** Call a friend, read a new magazine or book, or play a board or computer game.



Reason #2: I like to touch and handle cigarettes

If you answer “often” or “sometimes” to the following questions, this is one reason you smoke.

	Often	Sometimes	Never
I feel more comfortable with a cigarette in my hand.			
I enjoy getting a cigarette out of the pack and lighting up.			
I like to watch the smoke when I exhale.			

This type of smoker gets physical pleasure from handling cigarettes and the rituals of smoking. It just “feels right” to have a cigarette in your hand or mouth. In fact, many smokers say they have gone back to smoking because, “I had nothing to do with my hands.”

Getting over this obstacle can make it easier to quit and stay smoke-free. The following tips suggest other ways to satisfy the handling urge.

Tips to help you quit

- **Pick up a pen or pencil.** Do this when you want to reach for a cigarette. Doodle or make a list of your reasons for quitting.
- **“Fiddle” or “fidget”.** Fiddle with a coin, twist your ring, handle harmless objects like paper clips, marbles, a clothespin, or a soft ball to squeeze.
- **Puff on a straw.** Cut a straw in half and put it in your hand or mouth, puff on it. Put a toothpick in your mouth, being careful not to injure your gums.
- **Use plastic cigarettes.** Some have a minty taste to help you focus on how fresh your breath is without tobacco.



- **Eat regular meals to avoid being hungry.** Do not confuse needing to eat with the desire to put a cigarette in your mouth.
- **Take up a hobby that keeps your hands busy.** Try knitting, cross-stitching, painting, carpentry, gardening, washing the car, making bread, putting a puzzle together, or doing a crossword puzzle.
- **Give yourself a manicure.**
- **Have a low-fat, low-sugar snack** like carrot sticks, apple slices, or a bread stick. Suck on a sugar-free hard candy or mint.

Reason #3: Smoking is a pleasure

If you answer “often” or “sometimes” to the following questions, this is one reason you smoke.

	Often	Sometimes	Never
Smoking cigarettes is pleasant and enjoyable.			
Smoking makes good times better.			
I want a cigarette most when I am comfortable and relaxed.			
Smoking makes me feel like I am rewarding myself.			

Two out of three smokers say they just plain enjoy smoking. Many smokers say having a cigarette is like rewarding themselves or treating themselves because they deserve it. When you associate smoking with “the good times,” it can strengthen your smoking habit. It can be easier to quit when you focus on enjoying yourself without tobacco. The following tips offer some ideas to help you miss cigarettes less.

Tips to help you quit

- **Change brands.** While preparing for your quit date, switch to a brand of cigarettes you find distasteful. Do not smoke two packs of the same brand in a row. Switch to a brand of cigarettes that is low in tar and nicotine.
- **Do not inhale deeper** when smoking these cigarettes.
- **Save... See... Smell...** Save all of your cigarette butts in a large glass container. Add water. The sight and smell will remind you of the negative effects of smoking.



- **Enjoy the pleasures** of being tobacco-free. Savor:
 - how good foods taste and smell
 - how fresh you look and feel in social situations without smoking
 - how much easier it is to walk, run, and climb stairs now that your lungs are smoke-free
 - how good it feels to be in control of the urge to smoke
- **Spend the money you save on cigarettes on another kind of reward:** a shopping trip, a new outfit, a night out, a party to celebrate your success, a stereo system, a tree for your yard, a bouquet of flowers, or a fishing trip. Plan a special celebration each month on the anniversary of your quit date.
- **Remind yourself of the health benefits of quitting.** Giving up cigarettes can help you enjoy life's other pleasures for many years to come.

Reason #4: Smoking helps me relax when I am tense, upset, or depressed

If you answer “often” or “sometimes” to the following questions, this is one reason you smoke.

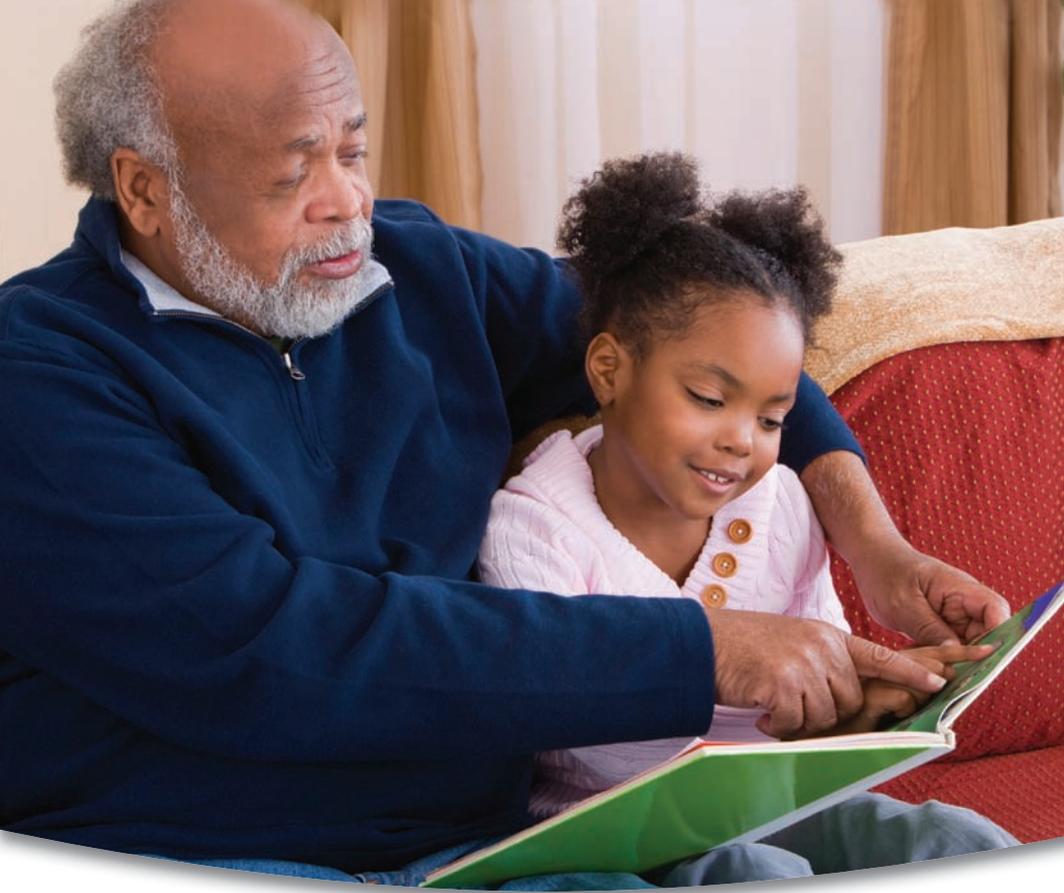
	Often	Sometimes	Never
I light up a cigarette when something makes me angry.			
Smoking relaxes me in a stressful situation.			
When I am depressed I reach for a cigarette to feel better.			

Many smokers use cigarettes to help them through bad times. Some situations which may make you want to smoke include: being around others who smoke, being under time pressure, feeling sad or frustrated, getting into an argument, and having too busy of a schedule. If you have used cigarettes as a crutch, finding another way to cope with stress can help you stay quit. Otherwise, you may want to smoke again whenever problems arise.

The following tips include ideas that have helped former smokers handle tense times without tobacco.

Tips to help you quit

- **Take a tobacco cessation class** which includes instruction in stress management.
- **Use relaxation techniques** to calm down when you are angry, anxious, or upset. Deep breathing exercises, muscle relaxation, and imagining yourself in a peaceful setting can make you feel less stressed.



- **Exercise regularly.** Studies show that exercise relieves tension and improves your mood.
- **Remember that smoking never solves the problem;** figure out what will, and act.
- **Talk out your feelings** with a trusted friend, or seek counseling.
- **Avoid or get out of stressful situations** that might tempt you to smoke.
- **Get enough rest.** Take time each day to relax, no matter how busy you are.
- **Enjoy relaxation.** Take a long hot bath. Have a massage. Lie in a garden hammock. Listen to soothing music. Listen to a comedy tape. Read a book.

Reason #5: I crave cigarettes; it is an addiction

If you answer “often” or “sometimes” to the following questions, this is one reason you smoke.

	Often	Sometimes	Never
When I run out of cigarettes, it is almost unbearable until I get more.			
I am very aware of not smoking when I do not have a cigarette in my hand.			
When I have not smoked for a while, I get a gnawing hunger for a cigarette.			
I wake up during the night to have a cigarette.			

Many smokers are addicted or “hooked” on the nicotine in tobacco. When addicted smokers quit, many go through a withdrawal period. They may have both physical symptoms (feeling tired and irritable, headaches, nervousness, dizziness, or trouble sleeping) and an emotional need for a cigarette. One ex-smoker compared their continued craving for cigarettes to the longing you feel for a lost love. Some smokers say, “I am too hooked. I just do not have what it takes to fight the addiction.”

It is not easy to get over an addiction to tobacco, but many people have succeeded – often after several tries. Once you are back in control, you will not have to beat smoking again. For many ex-smokers, that is a powerful motivation to stay tobacco-free. The following tips include ideas to help addicted smokers make it through withdrawal and stay away from cigarettes for good.



Tips to help you quit

- **Ask your doctor about using nicotine replacement products** such as a nicotine patch, gum, lozenge, nasal spray, or inhaler. These products are designed to help you avoid withdrawal symptoms. Some products are over-the-counter and some may be by prescription only. These products must be used correctly to be effective. Ask for instruction on proper use.
- **Ask your doctor about non-nicotine prescription medication to help you quit smoking.** Such products are designed to reduce withdrawal symptoms and the urge to smoke.
- **Try going “cold turkey” or tapering off.**
- **Tell family and friends you have quit smoking.** Ask for help if you need it.
- **Keep away from cigarettes completely.** Get rid of ashtrays. Destroy any cigarettes you have. Try to avoid people who smoke and smoke-filled places if you are having withdrawal symptoms or cigarette cravings.
- **Think of yourself as a non-smoker.** Hang up “No Smoking” signs.
- **“Hang-on” through withdrawal.** Physical withdrawal symptoms last about 2 weeks.

Reason #6: Smoking is a habit, a ritual

If you answer “often” or “sometimes” to the following questions, this is one reason you smoke.

	Often	Sometimes	Never
I smoke cigarettes automatically without even being aware of it.			
I light up a cigarette without realizing I have one burning in an ashtray.			
I find a cigarette in my mouth and do not remember putting it there.			
I do not even enjoy smoking any more.			

If you are this kind of smoker, you are no longer getting much satisfaction from your cigarettes. Unlike people who smoke for pleasure, you might not miss it very much if you stopped. The key is breaking your smoking patterns or routines. The following tips can help.

Tips to help you quit

- **Cut down gradually.** Smoke fewer cigarettes each day or only smoke them halfway down. Inhale less often and less deeply. After several months it should be easier to stop completely. If when tapering, you are unable to go below a certain number of cigarettes, set a quit day and quit completely.
- **Be aware of the triggers** which you associate with smoking: talking on the phone, driving a vehicle, finishing a meal, drinking coffee, watching others smoke, playing cards, drinking alcohol, reading the newspaper, watching television, waiting for a bus, break time at work, or waiting for food in a restaurant. Prepare for handling these situations.



- **Change your smoking routines.** Keep your cigarettes in a different place and at a distance from you. Smoke with your opposite hand. Do not do anything else while smoking. Limit smoking to certain places, such as outside, in one room at home, or not in your vehicle. Drink your coffee standing up.
- **Wait 1 minute when you want a cigarette.** Try to think of something else to do instead of smoking.
- **Think before you smoke.** Be aware of every cigarette you smoke. Ask yourself: Do I really want this cigarette? You may be surprised at how many you can easily pass up.
- **Change your habits** to make smoking difficult or impossible. Try playing tennis, jogging, or swimming.
- **Set a date** for giving up smoking altogether and stick to it.

Reason #7: Smoking relieves my boredom and loneliness

If you answer “often” or “sometimes” to the following questions, this is one reason you smoke.

	Often	Sometimes	Never
I smoke cigarettes when I do not have anything to do.			
I smoke more cigarettes when I am by myself.			
I do not feel as lonely when I smoke a cigarette.			

Many smokers smoke more whenever they are bored or alone. Weekends or days off from work may be difficult because there is more time to smoke. You may not be busy or have people around, so you smoke more often. The following tips can help.

Tips to help you quit

- **Tell your family and friends you are quitting smoking.** Call on them when you become lonely or feel the urge to smoke.
- **Find one person to be your coach or buddy** for support and encouragement.
- **Plan to not be alone and not be with smokers** the first few days after you quit.
- **Start an exercise program.** Start with simple exercises or walking. Check with your doctor before beginning a vigorous exercise program.
- **Start new projects you enjoy,** such as woodworking, sewing, or repair work. Learn to play solitaire or a computer game in which the computer is your opponent.



Reason #8: Smoking helps control my weight

If you answer “often” or “sometimes” to the following questions, this is one reason you smoke.

	Often	Sometimes	Never
I hurry through dinner so I can have a cigarette.			
I always gain weight when I try to quit smoking.			
I would rather be thin, even if it means smoking.			

Many smokers believe quitting smoking automatically means gaining weight. This is not always the case. When you quit smoking, the taste and smell of food often improves, so you may eat more. Some smokers enjoy having something in their mouth, and look for a substitute in eating food. The average person gains less than 10 pounds. The weight gained is a minor health risk compared to the risks of smoking.

It is generally recommended that you not attempt to diet along with quitting smoking. Focus on quitting smoking before worrying about possible weight gain. If you know weight gain can happen, you can prevent it by using common sense steps. The following tips can help.

Tips to help you quit

- **Eat a well-balanced diet.** Eating regular meals may help you avoid “binge” eating.
- **Slow down the speed of eating** by taking smaller bites of food, chewing more slowly and tasting the food, drinking water before and several sips during your meal.
- **Change meal times** to change your routine.



- **Get up from the table** as soon as you are done eating. Brush your teeth. Go for a walk. Wash the dishes.
- **Chew sugarless gum.** Eat small amounts of sugarless or low-calorie candies.
- **Keep your hands busy** with something that does not include food: play the piano, put puzzles together, squeeze a rubber ball, fiddle with an object such as a clothespin or paper clip.
- **Make your snacks nutritious** such as fruits, vegetables, low-fat foods, and air-popped popcorn without butter.
- **Be careful with alcohol** as it adds calories and may also lessen your ability to avoid overeating or smoking.
- **Exercise helps burn calories.** Take time for regular exercise, like walking, jogging, or bicycling. Check with your health care provider before beginning a vigorous exercise program.
- **Consider use of nicotine gum** as a way to help prevent or delay weight gain. When a craving comes, chew the gum instead of eating a snack.
- **Remind yourself that attractiveness is much more than how much you weigh.** It includes smelling clean, having fresh breath, and feeling healthier and good about yourself.

Reason #9: Smoking helps me fit in with other people

If you answer “often” or “sometimes” to the following questions, this is one reason you smoke.

	Often	Sometimes	Never
Most of my friends smoke cigarettes.			
I feel more comfortable with my friends when I smoke.			
I would feel like an outsider with my friends if I did not smoke.			
Smoking makes me feel more accepted by others.			

Many people start smoking because of peer pressure or group acceptance. They may say, “Everyone else smokes!” Remind yourself of the reasons you are quitting. Some people may not like it that you are quitting. They may try to change your mind. Do not give in to their wishes. You may need to avoid being around your smoking friends for a while when you first quit smoking.

Some people only smoke during break time at work. They smoke along with their co-workers or friends during lunch or break times. Some smokers only smoke at the bar among their friends. They may feel smoking helps them fit in, to be one of the group. The following tips can help.

Tips to help you quit

- **Tell your friends and family** why you have decided to quit smoking.
- **Ask for their encouragement and support.** Do not put any pressure on them to quit.



- **Be with people that are non-smokers.** Learn to enjoy activities that do not include smoking.
- **Avoid people who smoke and activities which involve smoking,** at least for the first few weeks. Be careful when you go back to spending time with smokers, as the temptation to smoke again will be powerful.

Reason #10: Smoking gives me a sense of control; I feel like I am “living on the edge!”

If you answer “often” or “sometimes” to the following questions, this is one reason you smoke.

	Often	Sometimes	Never
I know smoking is harmful to me, but I do not care.			
I am a “safe” smoker; I use safer cigarettes and do not inhale much.			
I know smoking is against the law for me, but I do not care!			
No one is going to tell me if I can smoke or not!			

Some people smoke as a way to feel liberated from authority and all the rules and regulations. Many teenagers may feel excited by courting with the dangers of breaking the law and the risk of developing health problems.

Many smokers believe they can smoke “safely” by using lower tar and nicotine brands of cigarettes. They feel they are the exception, that smoking may hurt others, but not them.

“I have to die from something!” is a phrase used by other smokers. They know the dangers of smoking, but are energized with the gamble of continuing to smoke. They may be proud of being a “risk-taker”. Some of the following tips may be useful.

Tips to help you quit

- **Keep a diary** of how, when, where, with whom, and why you smoke. Choose which cigarettes would be the easiest to quit and start with them.



- **Remind yourself that it really is not you who is in control; it is the nicotine addiction.** Work to take back the control. Ask your doctor about using nicotine replacement products such as the nicotine patch, gum, lozenge, nasal spray, or inhaler. Also ask your doctor about the stop smoking medication now available. These products must be used correctly to be effective. Ask for instruction on proper use.
- **Think before you smoke.** Be aware of every cigarette you smoke. Ask yourself, “Do I really want this cigarette?”
- **Remind yourself of the health benefits of quitting.**
- **Get a non-smoker to be your coach or buddy** for support and encouragement.
- **Talk to someone** who smoked for these same reasons, but who lost the gamble and developed severe health problems because of smoking.

Quit-smoking resources

Whatever your reasons for smoking cigarettes, you can quit. For more information:

- Ask your health care provider or clinic.
- Call the toll-free Tobacco Quit Line at **1-800-Quit Now (1-800-784-8669)** or visit www.ctri.wisc.edu/quitline.html*
- Call your local office of the American Cancer Society, American Lung Association, or the American Heart Association.
- American Lung Association “Freedom from Smoking®”: www.ffsonline.org
- American Cancer Society: www.cancer.org/Healthy/StayAwayFromTobacco**
- American Heart Association: www.heart.org/ (click on “Getting Healthy” tab, then “Quit Smoking”)**
- “Quit Smoking Today”: www.smokefree.gov/*
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Smoking and Tobacco Use”: www.cdc.gov/tobacco/**
- Smoking Cessation Health Center: www.webmd.com (text “smoking cessation”)
- Life Without Cigarettes: www.becomeanex.org*
- Smokeless Tobacco Users: www.chewfree.com

* Information available in Spanish.

** Information available in multiple languages.

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