

Avoiding Tobacco After Quitting

Know Your Triggers

What is a trigger for tobacco use? This is a feeling or situation that is likely to lead a person to smoke or chew tobacco. Being aware of the feelings or situations that trigger you, you can plan ahead for dealing with them without using tobacco.

Common Triggers

Here is a list of some common triggers. Circle your triggers. Add others to the list as you become aware of them.

- Waking up
- Talking on the phone
- Drinking coffee or caffeine
- Drinking alcohol
- Meeting new people
- Being at a party
- Being on vacation
- Driving
- Waiting for a bus
- Relaxing after a meal
- Watching TV
- Working under pressure
- Feeling nervous
- Feeling angry
- Feeling bored or tense
- Feeling hungry
- Having free time during breaks
- Having free time before or after work

Use Your Coping Skills

A coping skill is what you do to deal with a hard feeling or situation so that you don't use tobacco. It is something you do to distract yourself from nicotine cravings.

Here is a list of ideas to help you become aware of your coping skills and make new ones.

- Make a list of things you like to do for fun and to relax. When you feel stressed or have a craving, reach for the list and keep trying until you find one that works.
- Get some exercise. Try different kinds of exercise to see what you like.
- Keep items in your home, car, backpack, purse, or pockets to keep your hands busy. These items may include things such as straws, pencils, small toys, electronic devices, or marbles.
- Try something new. Stay away from things you did when you smoked.
- Spend as much free time as you can in places where smoking is not allowed.
- Ask your family and friends for support.
- Eat several small meals. This helps maintain constant blood sugar levels and prevents the urge to smoke. Avoid sweet or spicy foods that can cause a craving.
- Try using toothpicks, cinnamon sticks, gum, raisins, or celery, if you miss the feeling of having something in your mouth.
- Brush your teeth and enjoy the clean taste.
- Take a shower or a bath.
- Tell yourself "no." Say it out loud. Practice doing this a few times and listen to yourself. Other things to say include "I'm too strong to give into smoking," "I am a nonsmoker now," and "I will not let my friends, family,

and myself down.”

- Never allow yourself to think that “I’ll just have one, it won’t hurt.” Because it will.

Practice Your Coping Skills

Here are a few feelings and situations that often trigger tobacco use. How would you use your coping skills in these cases to avoid using tobacco?

- You’re at a party with a group of friends. Your friends are smoking. You always used to smoke at a party and a cigarette would sure be good now. What would you do or say?
- You’re alone. You’re feeling sad about a family member or friend who has died. How do you cope with the feelings without smoking?
- You have a fight with your sister. You feel so angry as you walk away or hang up the phone. You used to smoke when you felt this way. What do you do now?
- You are at work and it is time for a break. Instead of going outside and having a cigarette with your smoking co-workers, what will you do now to take a break?

Slip Ups

Many people slip and use tobacco after they have quit. The good news is that many of these people learn from their slip and stop using tobacco.

Here are some tips to get back on track:

- Stop smoking or chewing right away.
- Throw the tobacco away.
- Get yourself out of the situation that caused the slip.

Once you have removed yourself from the situation, take a moment to ask yourself these questions:

- Where was I when this happened?
- What was I doing?
- Was I alone or with someone?
- How was I feeling? Was I hungry, angry, lonely, or tired?

If you slip, learn and keep trying. You can succeed in quitting.