Are You Ready to Quit Smoking?

If you are like most adults who smoke, you know that smoking is harmful for your health. You have also probably thought about quitting, or you might have tried to stop many times. There is no easy way to quit. Smoking is a powerful addiction. But you can beat it.

One of the first things is to think about why you smoke and why you want to quit. Ask yourself these questions:

- Is smoking a problem for me? Why or why not?
- What is my biggest worry about continuing to smoke?
- What is my biggest worry about quitting?
- What will I have to give up if I quit smoking?
- What will I gain by quitting?

Understanding more about why you smoke and what gets in the way of quitting will help you make a plan that will work. For example, if you are most worried about withdrawal symptoms, you can ask your provider about aids for quitting. There are prescription medicines to ease withdrawal. Nicotine patches and gum are available without prescription and double your chances for success.

Once you understand more about why you smoke and why you want to quit, these four steps to can help increase your chances for success:

- Make a plan and set a date to stop. It's easy to put off quitting. But remember, the sooner you start, the sooner you will be able to stop.
- Ask for help and support from your family and friends. Be sure to let them know how they can be most helpful to you as well.
- Create new habits and skills. Think about how you use cigarettes. Is it to cope with stress? To socialize with your friends? To give you a boost of energy? Think about other things you can do that will offer these same benefits. For example, exercise raises the level of "feel good" hormones and counteracts the effects of stress hormones. It also takes your mind off smoking.
- Avoid relapse. No matter how firmly you are committed to not smoking, you will likely face temptation. Avoid your "triggers" for smoking: a cup of coffee, a glass of beer or wine, break-time at work. Thinking about what you want to gain by not smoking can also help when the going gets tough. Take it 1 hour and 1 day at a time and remember to congratulate yourself for every step you take along the way. If one day doesn't go so well, don't give up. Ask yourself what you learned and how you might handle it differently next time. You have not failed as long as you keep trying.

There are many health benefits for not smoking. There are even more if you have diabetes. Along with all of the other health risks, smoking increases the risk for certain complications from diabetes, such as blindness, amputations, and kidney damage. You will also gain more immediate benefits. You will save money and time, you will have more energy, and chances are, you will feel good about yourself for having beaten a very powerful enemy.

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