

Thinking about quitting smoking?

Do you realize it's been 21 days since the Great American Smokeout[®]?

So, how are you doing? If you're still smoke-free, you may have noticed that breathing has become easier. The absence of nicotine and other hazardous chemicals in cigarettes has allowed your body's circulation to improve, carrying more oxygen throughout your body and increasing your lung function by about 30 percent¹. You may also be enjoying an enhanced sense of smell and taste, and you probably have some extra money in your pocket.

Don't be surprised if certain situations like riding in the car, enjoying a drink, or eating a meal increase your urge for a cigarette. These triggers are habitual, so it's normal to associate your past smoking habit with these events. At times like these you need to be creative.

Below are a few frequently asked questions that may assist you in your efforts to stay smoke-free.

Q: Some of my friends and family are smokers. What should I do when I'm with them?

A: Tell them that you are quitting and ask them to assist you in this effort. Specifically, ask them not to smoke around you or leave packs of cigarettes out around you.

Q: What kinds of activities can I do when I feel the urge to smoke?

A: Talk with someone, go for a walk, drink water, or get busy with a task. Reduce your stress by taking a hot bath, exercising, or reading a book.

Q: How can I change my daily routine, which includes smoking a cigarette with my breakfast?

A: When you first try to quit, change your routine. Eat breakfast in a different place, and drink tea instead of coffee. Take a different route to work.

Q: I like to smoke when I have a drink. Do I have to give up both?

A: It's best to avoid drinking alcohol for the first three months after quitting because drinking lowers your chances of success at quitting smoking. It helps to drink a lot of water and other nonalcoholic drinks when you are trying to quit smoking.

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Great American Smokeout[®]

Behavior Change

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Q: I've tried to quit before and it didn't work. What can I do?

A: Remember that most people have to try to quit at least two or three times before they succeed. Review your past attempts to quit. Think about what worked – and what didn't – and try to use your most successful strategies again.

Q: What should I do if I need more help?

A: Get individual, group, or telephone counseling. The more counseling you get, the better your chances are of quitting for good. Some local hospitals and health centers offer programs. Call your local health department for information about programs in your area. Also, talk with your doctor.

Congratulations on your accomplishments so far, and best wishes for a smoke-free future!

Source: Frequently Asked Questions About Quitting Smoking. November 2000. U.S. Public Health Service. www.surgeongeneral.gov/tobacco/faq.htm

¹ US Surgeon General's Report, 1990



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