

Quitting Tobacco: Enjoying Meals ... Without Smoking

What To Expect

- Smoking urges may be stronger at different meal times—sometimes breakfast, sometimes lunch, or sometimes dinner.
- Your smoking urges may be stronger with certain foods, such as spicy or sweet meals or snacks.
- Expect to want to smoke after meals or with others at a restaurant.
- Expect the urge to smoke when you smell cigarette smoke at a restaurant.
- When you no longer smoke at the table after meals, you can expect that others will be pleased.

Did You Know?

- Many smokers feel the need to smoke after meals at home, work, or a restaurant.
- Your desire to smoke after meals may depend on whether you are alone, with other smokers, or with nonsmokers.

What To Do

- Know what kinds of foods increase your urge to smoke and stay away from them.
- If you are alone, call a friend or take a walk as soon as you've finished eating.
- Brush your teeth or use mouthwash right after meals.
- If possible, have someone massage your shoulders.
- If you have coffee or a fruit drink, concentrate on the taste.
- Wash the dishes by hand after eating—you can't smoke with wet hands!

Nicotine and Your Body and Mind

- Nicotine stops hunger pains in your stomach for as long as one hour, and it also makes your blood sugar level go up. When you quit, this is reversed.
- Smoking and eating are both ways to meet certain needs (stimulation, relaxation, pampering, time out, comfort, or socialization), so when you quit smoking, you may eat more.
- Withdrawal from nicotine enhances the taste of sweeter foods. Food often tastes better after you quit smoking, and you may have a bigger appetite.



Related Notes

- Once you pinpoint high-risk situations that trigger the urge to smoke, you can begin to handle such situations. Eating and drinking are often very important triggers. Nicotine cravings may be reduced by using nicotine replacement products, which deliver small, steady doses of nicotine into the body. Nicotine replacement patches, gum, lozenges, nasal spray, and inhaler appear to be equally effective. Bupropion pills (which don't contain nicotine) also help relieve withdrawal symptoms.

How To Get Help

- If you or someone you know wants help with giving up tobacco, please call the National Cancer Institute's Smoking Quitline toll-free at 1-877-44U-QUIT (1-877-448-7848). The information specialists on the Quitline can provide suggestions and support to help smokers break the habit.
- The Federal Government's Smokefree.gov Web site (<http://www.smokefree.gov>) allows you to choose the help that best fits your needs. You can get immediate assistance:
 - View an online step-by-step cessation guide.
 - Find state quitline telephone numbers.
 - Instant message an expert through NCI's *LiveHelp* service.
 - Download, print, or order publications about quitting smoking.

This fact sheet was adapted from material developed by the Tobacco Education and Prevention Program of the Arizona Department of Health Services and the Arizona Smokers' Helpline of the University of Arizona.

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