

Quitting Tobacco: Being Around Other Smokers ... Without Smoking

What To Expect

- Some friends, especially those who are smokers themselves, may not be supportive of your efforts to cut down or quit. Also, they may not understand how much impact their behavior can have on your efforts to quit.
- The changes you intend to make may disturb friends and family members who are smokers.
- Friends may feel that your efforts to quit smoking will put a strain on your friendship. It will be tempting to join others for routine smoke breaks.

Did You Know?

- You may find that you don't want to smoke just because you see someone else smoking. Rather, your desire to smoke may be triggered by something special about the situation. For example, being around the people you usually smoked with could trigger the urge to smoke.

What To Do

- Ask others to help you in your quit attempt. Give them specific examples of things that are helpful (such as not smoking around you) and things that are not helpful (like asking you to buy cigarettes for them).
- Post a small "No Smoking" sign by your front door. Provide an outside area where smokers may go if they wish to smoke.
- If you are in a group and others light up, excuse yourself, and don't return until they have finished.
- Do not buy, carry, light, or hold cigarettes for others.
- Try not to get angry if family, friends, or coworkers hassle you about quitting.

Nicotine and Your Body and Mind

- You may want to analyze situations in which watching others smoke triggers your urge to smoke. Figure out what it is about that situation that makes you want to smoke.
- Many studies have reported that smoking may make you feel happier, more alert, and not as anxious. These good feelings may make you want to smoke. Also, you may associate these feelings with being around other smokers.



- When you quit, you may feel saddened by the loss of these good feelings; being around smokers may make you feel even sadder. Try not to feel sad; think of what you've gained by quitting.

Related Notes

- Once you pinpoint high-risk "trigger" situations, you can start to handle them rationally. 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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