

## Quitting Tobacco: Handling Irritability and Frustration ... Without Smoking

### What To Expect

- When you quit smoking, you may feel edgy and short-tempered.
- You may want to give up on tasks more quickly than usual.
- You may be less tolerant of others' behavior.
- You may get into more arguments.

### Did You Know?

- Studies have found that most quitters report increased feelings of irritability, anger, and frustration within a week of quitting.
- If feelings of irritability, anger, and frustration occur, they usually begin on the first day, peak during the first couple of weeks, and disappear within a month.

### What To Do

- Take a walk.
- Exercise.
- Reduce caffeine.
- Soak in a hot bath.
- Read up on relaxation/meditation techniques and use one.
- Take one minute and, with your eyes closed, pay attention to your breathing pattern. Breathe in deeply through your nose and breathe out through your mouth.

### Nicotine and Your Body and Mind

- When your body does not get nicotine, you may feel irritable, angry, and frustrated.
- Quitting will temporarily change your brain chemistry. These temporary changes may result in your experiencing negative emotions.

### Related Notes

- Feelings of anger, irritability, and frustration 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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