

Relapse Prevention Tips for Recent Quitters

These are some situations that may trigger the urge / craving to smoke

Steer clear of passive smoking

Environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) should be avoided at all costs as it is proven to be harmful to everyone's health. Passive smoking in the early stages of a quit attempt may trigger the urge to smoke. Because passive smoking is a form of smoking, the nicotine will stimulate the nicotine receptors in the brain and cause cravings to smoke.

All smoking should be restricted to outdoors, and people who live with smokers should request that they smoke outside. Avoid places where smoking is still allowed while you become stronger in your resolve to not smoke.

Alcohol

Alcohol in any amount may trigger your urge to smoke and weaken your resolve to abstain. Alcohol acts to stimulate the nicotine receptors in the brain and also acts as a disinhibitor and makes people feel relaxed. This may place you at risk of relapse.

It is advised that recent quitters abstain from all alcohol consumption for the first two weeks of smoking cessation. You may then re-introduce it at levels that do not place you at risk of relapse. Keeping to the recommended safe consumption levels is a good guide. Have your nicotine replacement product handy and use it if you feel a craving.

"Safe" levels of alcohol consumption are two standard drinks per day for women, four standard drinks per day for men, and two alcohol free days per week for every-one. A standard drink = one middy of full strength beer, 1 x 30mls nip of spirits, 100mls glass of wine or 60mls of fortified wine.

Caffeine

Caffeine may increase your urge to smoke. It is advised that recent quitters reduce their caffeine consumption to half what they normally drink. If that particular cuppa eg. first one in the morning is difficult to enjoy without a cigarette, then don't have it at all.

Keep to your routine

It is recommended that routine activities be continued. It is by not combining these activities with smoking, that you will have the key to successfully quitting and forming 'new' and healthy habits.

The withdrawal symptoms from nicotine that are experienced will gradually occur less frequently and be shorter and less intense.

Stopping smoking is a skill and like any new skill it will become better and easier with practice.

As a non-smoker your appetite may increase, especially for sweet foods. This will subside over time. In the interim it is all right to substitute cravings with foods not usually eaten. Nicotine raises the blood sugar and as there is now less nicotine in the system this causes the blood sugar to drop, causing hunger. This will subside over time and can be eased by using NRT.

A healthy diet and regular daily exercise will use up the extra calories and keep weight gain to a minimum.