

TOBACCO CESSATION: HOW TO CHANGE?

July, 2021

To effectively change your tobacco use, consider all of the factors that contribute to using tobacco. It can be helpful to group these factors into three main categories: physical factors, habits, and psychological factors (i.e., your thoughts and emotions).

- *Physically*, nicotine is one of the most addictive substances on the planet. Discuss with your PCM whether it is appropriate for you to use a nicotine replacement product such as the patch or gum, or a medication.
- *Behaviorally*, you will need to change your habits and modify the situations that you typically associate with tobacco. Your Behavioral Health Consultant (BHC) in your primary care clinic can assist you with these changes. In addition to services in primary care, the DoD offers tobacco cessation groups and/or individual counseling on most bases. Also, if you prefer telephone counseling, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).
- *Thoughts and emotions* are some of the hardest aspects of tobacco use to change. Often, individuals think that they need tobacco to get through a difficult situation. Changing these thoughts to cope with stress and negative emotions is an essential aspect of successful tobacco cessation.

One helpful strategy is to list your top 3 reasons for quitting and to remind yourself of these reasons periodically as a way to resist the urge to use tobacco. Take a moment to list *your* main reasons for quitting:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Preparing to Quit

Setting Your Quit Date

When is the last day/time that you are going to use tobacco? Month _____ Day _____ Time _____

Preparing to Quit

Before your quit date consider the following:

- Don't buy tobacco in bulk (e.g., don't buy cartons).
- Find all of your hidden stashes of tobacco. Check in the couch, the glove compartment, in your drawers at home and at work. It is unwise to keep an emergency stash once you quit.

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TOBACCO CESSATION: HOW TO CHANGE? (CONT.)

July, 2021

- Get rid of tobacco-related materials like ashtrays and lighters. You may need lighters for candles or fireplaces, but you likely don't need to carry lighters wherever you go.
- Prepare family and friends. Let them know that you are planning to quit and ask for their help. If you have friends and family who use tobacco, ask them to avoid using it around you.
- Make a plan for coping with cravings and withdrawal symptoms. Use a combination of strategies.
- Choose a method to quit: "cold turkey," tapering, and a planned quit date supported with behavioral quit strategies and/or medication (for example nicotine patch) to assist with withdrawal symptoms.

Using the Four A's to Outsmart Tobacco Urges

Avoid. What are the situations or places that you need to avoid over the next month (e.g., bars, "smoke pits," smoke breaks, etc)?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Alter. What things will you need to change to help you be more successful (e.g., removing tobacco products and accessories from your environment, going for walk instead of smoke break, etc)?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Alternatives. What can you put in your mouth or hands instead of using tobacco (e.g., gum, mints, healthy snack, stress balls, etc)?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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Action. When you get an urge to use tobacco, what can you do to be active or busy (e.g., distracting activities, call a friend, relaxation exercise, etc)?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Follow-Up Appointment Plan:

Adapted from: Hunter, C.L., Goodie, J.L., Oordt, M.S., & Dobbmeyer, A.C. (2009). *Integrated Behavioral Health in Primary Care: Step-by-step Guidance for Assessment and Intervention*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

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