

Smoking Cessation Guide for Cancer Patients and Their Families

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Welcome to the Smoking Cessation Program

The Smoking Cessation Program at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center specializes in helping our cancer patients, cancer survivors and their families improve their health by quitting smoking. Our team of trained professionals offers individual counseling to anyone who wants to quit, or who is considering quitting.

How will this guide help?

We want this guide to help you:

- Understand nicotine dependence.
- Understand the benefits of quitting smoking.
- Quit smoking through different methods.
- Learn skills that will help you cope with urges to smoke.
- Develop strategies for getting support from your family and friends.

At Memorial, we understand that you may be coping with cancer while undertaking the challenge of quitting smoking. By learning skills to cope with symptoms of nicotine withdrawal and strategies for getting support from loved ones, you will be better prepared to quit. This guide also has suggestions for improving your quality of life as you and your family face the challenges of cancer.

What should I expect?

Each section of this guide will help you prepare and become a non-smoker. This guide does not give you a quick and easy fix. It does provide you with information about nicotine dependence and ways to cope with smoking urges. Our hope is to guide you from thinking about quitting to actually quitting.

- A variety of strategies are reviewed. Decide which ones you feel most comfortable with. It may take some time to find the right combination of “tools.” **But you can successfully quit for good.** We have learned from experience that cancer patients who smoke are among the most successful in quitting the smoking habit!
- Quitting smoking is the most important step you can take to protect your health now and in the future. Some of you will be able to quit with this guide. Others may need other support, such as individual counseling. Our program staff and your healthcare team are here to help (1-212-610-0507). Welcome to the Smoking Cessation Program.

The Importance of Smoking Cessation in Cancer Care

We understand that quitting smoking is challenging at any time. Quitting when you have cancer can make it more challenging. In some ways, though, this is the best time to quit. Most cancer patients are highly motivated to

protect their health. In other ways, this may feel like the worst time to quit because smokers often cope with stress by smoking.

Some cancer patients feel a sense of guilt because of their smoking. Like most smokers, you probably started smoking in your teens, when you were truly unaware of the health effects of smoking. You never thought that you would become dependent on nicotine. By the time you realized the harms of smoking, you were already “hooked.” Fortunately, there are effective ways to help you become free of tobacco dependence.

Stopping smoking at this time may seem overwhelming, but in our experience many cancer patients who quit with the right help are successful. We hope this guide will encourage you—and your family members who smoke—to try to quit and stay quit.

Are you Ready to Quit SMOKING?

10 Reasons for Cancer Patients to Quit Smoking

Quitting smoking is one of the most important things you can do to improve your health. It is never too late to experience the benefits. Quitting smoking has important health benefits for anyone with cancer. It doesn't matter whether you have been recently diagnosed, are having treatment, are recovering from treatment, or are a long-term cancer survivor.

Why quit smoking after a cancer diagnosis?

1. You become an active partner in your own healthcare.
2. MSKCC doctors advise quitting smoking because of the health benefits.
3. It may help those diagnosed with cancer live longer and decrease the risk of a cancer recurrence or of developing new cancers.
4. Quitting improves the effectiveness of radiotherapy for some types of cancer.
5. Quitting improves the healing of surgical wounds.
6. Quitting lowers the risk of infection following surgery.
7. Quitting reduces symptoms related to chemotherapy toxicity such as infection, and heart, stomach or breathing problems.
8. Quitting decreases the need for rehabilitation to improve breathing following surgery.
9. Quitting improves the functioning of your heart and lungs.
10. Quitting decreases physical symptoms and improves appetite, sleep, and energy.
11. Patients who quit report better emotional well-being and quality of life.
12. Patients report experiencing greater self-esteem, feelings of self-control and mastery.

Be sure to ask your oncologist about personal benefits of smoking cessation and the risks of continued smoking for your specific cancer and treatment plan.

General Health Benefits When You Quit Smoking

The American Cancer Society suggests that everyone can enjoy important health benefits from smoking cessation, starting...

- **20 minutes after quitting smoking:**

Your blood pressure decreases to your normal level. The temperature of your hands and feet increases to normal.

- **8 hours after quitting smoking:**

The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.

- **24 hours after quitting smoking:**
Your chance of a heart attack decreases.
- **2 weeks – 3 months after quitting smoking:**
Your circulation improves and your lung function increases up to 30%.
- **1 – 9 months after quitting smoking:**
Coughing, sinus congestion, fatigue, and shortness of breath decrease. Cilia (tiny hair-like structures) regain normal function, increasing their ability to clean the lungs and reduce infection.
- **1 year after quitting smoking:**
The risk of coronary heart disease is one-half that of a smoker's.
- **5 years after quitting smoking:**
Stroke risk is reduced to that of a non-smoker's.
- **10 years after quitting smoking:**
The death rate from lung cancer is 50% lower than that of a person who continues to smoke. The risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney, and pancreas decreases.
- **15 years after quitting smoking:**
The risk of coronary heart disease is the same as a non-smoker's.

More Health Benefits of Smoking Cessation

Here are other rewards that you should not overlook:

Improved:

- ✓ Sense of smell
- ✓ Sense of taste
- ✓ Appetite

Lower risk of:

- ✓ Osteoporosis-related bone fractures
- ✓ Erectile dysfunction and infertility
- ✓ Premature aging of the skin
- ✓ Loss of teeth and gum disease

Identifying Your Reasons to Quit Smoking

Below on the left are some examples cancer patients have shared with us about why they want to quit smoking. However, the decision to quit smoking is a personal one. In the space on the right, take a moment to list your own reasons for quitting smoking.

Examples

To be more involved in my health care
To have more energy and stamina
To have a sense of accomplishment
To see my children/grandchildren
grow up
To set a good example
Smoking harms my health
Yellow teeth, unhealthy gums
Smoking smells bad
Difficulty breathing

My Reasons to Quit Smoking

List your reasons here:

It's expensive	_____
Few of my friends smoke anymore	_____
Others dislike smoking	_____
I want freedom from tobacco dependence	_____

Weighing the Decision to Quit Smoking

In the section above, you listed your reasons for quitting smoking. However, many smokers have some concerns about quitting as they weigh the pros and cons of this important decision. It is important for you to identify your specific concerns, so that you can find ways to handle them. The first column of this worksheet shows how one cancer patient described the “Concerns about Quitting.” The second column shows the plan made for dealing with these issues. In the columns below, list your own concerns about quitting and how you might deal with these issues.

EXAMPLE

Concerns about Quitting	Suggestions for Handling These Concerns
I will be irritable	➔ Medication for quitting will help; Ask people to be patient with me
Quitting will make me feel lousy	➔ Some discomfort is expected; Within a few days,I will feel like myself again
I'm afraid I will fail	➔ Quitting takes practice and I'll learn from my mistakes. If I slip, I'll get back on track; Get support
Smoking relaxes me	➔ Take 3 deep breaths; Listen to music; Exercise
Smoking is a difficult habit to break	➔ Tell myself, it may be tough at first, but my urges to smoke will lessen, and I'll learn to live without cigarettes
I enjoy it	➔ Drink a cup of hot tea; Go for a walk; See a movie
Smoking is comforting	➔ Get a massage; Call a friend; Soak in a bath

MY LIST

My Concerns about Quitting	How I Will Handle These Concerns

START: Steps to Quitting Smoking

The National Cancer Institute recommends the START approach for people who want to stop smoking. When you are ready, START and use the strategies below to quit smoking. They can be quite effective in helping smokers succeed in becoming, and staying, tobacco-free.



S = Set a quit date (the actual day you will stop smoking).

T = Tell family, friends, and co-workers you plan to quit and when.

A = Anticipate and plan for the challenges you may face while quitting.

R = Remove cigarettes and other tobacco products from your home, car, and work.

T = Talk with your doctor about quitting

START: S = Set an Actual Quit Date

...Are You Ready?

☒ I WANT TO SET A QUIT DATE

Some smokers may be ready to set a quit date right now. If so, the steps after this one will help you reach your goal. Choosing a quit date increases your chances of success, because setting a specific goal increases motivation.

or ...

☒ SETTING A QUIT DATE ISN'T RIGHT FOR ME

Not everyone reading this guide will be ready to set an actual quit date. Some smokers succeed without setting a quit date, and you can best decide which type of person you are. While there is no perfect time for quitting, you may need more preparation, and that's okay. Review your reasons for quitting on page 5, and the steps discussed in this guide can help you feel more confident in setting a quit date later.

START: T = Tell Family, Friends, and Co-Workers that You Plan to Quit and When

The support and encouragement of friends and loved ones can also help you reach your goal of being smoke-free after a cancer diagnosis.

Tips for Your Family and Friends on Supporting You When Quitting Smoking

- Tell your friends, partner, or family members what specific ways they can be helpful to you when you are quitting. Those closest to you want to know how they can best support you in your quitting efforts.
- When you feel like smoking, ask others to help you focus on the benefits of quitting. Think about your health, freedom, self-esteem or a greater sense of personal control and confidence. Your friends and family may have strong feelings about your smoking. Given how much they care about you, these strong feelings are understandable.
- Advise them not to lecture you. You can suggest ways that they can be helpful. Tell them to praise your attempts to quit but be careful not to overdo it. They should never focus on setbacks, but focus only on **successes**, no matter how small they may be. Every step towards quitting is a positive step.
- Practice relaxing together or alone. Also try using deep breathing, walking and listening to your favorite music.
- Ask them for help in planning how you will deal with urges to smoke.

- Request that they plan something special to celebrate your Quit Day, like a movie or dinner.
- Ask them to be there for you if you want to talk – in person or by telephone. Just having your partner or loved one listen can be helpful.
- Ask them to prepare snacks and a “quit kit” including sugarless gum, mints, fruits, or soda.
- Encourage them to plan a reward for when you become an ex-smoker, perhaps lunch or a new book or music CD.

Most importantly, if your family members or friends are smokers, consider asking them to take steps to quit along with you. You may find that you can give each other the best support since you know what the other is going through. If they aren't ready to quit, take steps to keep their smoking from being a temptation. Ask them to pledge not to smoke around you, your home and your car.

START: A = Anticipate and Plan for the Challenges You May Face While Quitting

Nicotine addiction is just one of the reasons people continue to smoke. There may be triggers and habits that “set you off” or “tell” you to smoke. Drinking coffee or alcohol, finishing a meal, and feeling stressed are common examples of triggers that may prompt you to smoke. After lots of repetition, the link between a trigger and the urge to smoke becomes strong and you may no longer be aware of how powerful this is. However, by facing each urge to smoke without lighting up, you will begin to break the bonds between triggers and urges to smoke. Using healthy coping strategies to resist urges to smoke will help you, and you will learn about these in the following sections of this guide.

Now is a good time to think about your personal smoking triggers and coping strategies you have used successfully in the past to resist urges. Use them again now to help you become smoke-free. If your smoking cessation “tool-kit” needs to have more tools, try out new coping strategies.

Remember:

Expecting challenges is an important part of preparing to quit. If you've tried to quit smoking before, you are one step further along the road to quitting smoking. Review these previous quit attempts and think about what you can do differently the next time. Take time now to select the strategies you will start using on your quit date.

Practice New Skills and Behaviors to Cope with Urges to Smoke

Once you quit smoking, there are a number of ways to cope with urges to smoke.

Basic strategies: the “4 Ds”

Remember, cravings last only a minute or two so any of the following strategies, called the “4 Ds,” can help you stay smoke-free:

Delay – wait a few moments

Drink a glass of water

Distract - do something else

Deep breathing

Cigarette Substitutes

The following list includes some things you can substitute for cigarettes. As time goes by, you will feel the need to use these substitutes less and less:

- Sugar-free candy
- Sugar-free chewing gum

- Walking
- Deep breathing exercises
- “Smart snacks” such as carrots, celery sticks, and fruit
- Non-alcoholic beverages
- Treating yourself to something you enjoy (a good book, a movie, a manicure or massage, a new outfit) as a gift for staying smoke-free

Positive Self-Talk: It works!

What is positive self-talk?

You may not know it, but many of our thoughts involve “self-talk.” We are able to influence our level of stress, mood and even our behavior by our own thoughts. You can feel more upset, worried or depressed by thinking of reasons why you can’t deal with things. Or, you can reduce stress by using optimistic, encouraging, and motivational self-talk. You can also talk yourself into OR out of smoking a cigarette.

Watch out for negative self-talk. For example:

1. Expecting perfection from yourself. Remember, all of us make mistakes from time to time.
2. Criticizing yourself, only focusing on your faults but neglecting your strengths.
3. Dwelling only on the negative events that have happened to you without considering the positive.
4. Thinking in “black or white” or “all or none” patterns. It’s okay to falter, and setbacks are expected when making a change.

Examples of Changing Negative Self-Talk

Instead of saying to yourself:	Tell yourself:
“This is just too hard, I just can’t quit smoking.”	“I may have been hooked, but now I am learning how to live life without smoking. This is a challenge, and I’m making progress one step at a time.”
Instead of saying:	Tell yourself:
“Why bother? Deep down, I don’t really see the point of quitting, anyway.”	“I made a commitment to quit based on some very good reasons, such as improving my chance of staying cancer-free and improving my stamina. My doctor has described some benefits of quitting, and I want to do everything I can to fight this disease. I have come a long way, and I will make it.”
Instead of saying:	Tell yourself:
“I need a cigarette – then things will improve!”	“Cigarettes do not improve situations; they provide a brief escape. Smoking will not solve this problem. I can find other ways to improve my situation.”

To handle temptations, you can use “positive self-talk” to challenge negative thoughts that might weaken your ability to resist smoking.

What are possible symptoms of nicotine withdrawal, and other feelings I may experience while quitting smoking?

When you stop smoking, you are ending your body’s dependence on nicotine. As a result, you may have withdrawal symptoms. Common symptoms of nicotine withdrawal include cravings, urges to smoke, irritability, difficulty concentrating, restlessness, increased appetite, anxiety and depressed mood. These symptoms will improve one to two weeks after you stop smoking. For some cancer patients, withdrawal symptoms will be mild and less frequent by one month after their last cigarette. For others, some symptoms may last longer.

The first few days after quitting smoking may be hard. Keep in mind that feeling irritable, upset, or down can be a normal part of early nicotine withdrawal. Remember that your feelings are temporary and remind yourself of why you want to quit smoking. Also, you should continue to use strategies for coping with smoking urges.

Each patient experiences withdrawal differently, but here are the most common withdrawal symptoms and helpful tips on managing them:

What should I do when I am irritable, anxious, depressed or sad?

Some people experience agitation, nervousness, depression or sadness after quitting smoking. These feelings are all considered common nicotine withdrawal symptoms, and are normal to some extent. Although they can be quite unpleasant, these feelings will go away or lessen over time for most patients. When added to the stresses of a cancer diagnosis and other concerns such as family, work, or finances, these symptoms can make it feel almost impossible to quit. However, research has shown this is an effective time for patients to quit smoking. By seeking support and finding ways to reduce or cope with the stress in your life, you may feel better. The following may help:

- Engage in pleasant activities that improve your mood and distract you.
- Take time for yourself in ways that make you feel better.
- Talk to a supportive friend or family member.
- Remind yourself that you will “get through this.”
- Exercise is known to reduce stress and improve your mood. Be sure to check with your physician before starting any exercise program.

Using these strategies doesn't mean that you can always prevent upsetting situations and emotions, but applying these suggestions may lower the amount of distress. These strategies can help you resist urges to smoke when your emotional defenses may be low.

For some patients, the feelings related to having cancer, together with smoking cessation, can be overwhelming. If these feelings begin to interfere with your normal activities, you may be experiencing some form of depression or anxiety. You may benefit from contacting a mental health professional with expertise in treating patients who need to quit smoking and are experiencing emotional distress. Here at Memorial, we are able to provide emotional support and assistance to you and your family. **You can call 1-212-610-0507 to reach our Smoking Cessation Program staff.**

What else can I do to improve my mood?

- **Use Positive Self-Talk:** What you say to yourself will affect the way you feel. Dwelling on the negative can lead you to feeling more upset. Thinking more positively can help you feel better about your ability to cope with difficult situations (see page 7).
- **Find a Favorite Place To “Let Go” of Stress.** Playing some relaxing music may help you release tension, pain, and discomfort.
- **Seek Pleasant Activities and Friends:** Spend time enjoying hobbies, treating yourself, and taking comfort from the conversation and company of friends.
- **Avoid Alcohol:** This is a poor choice for coping with stress. Alcohol generates more stress by its negative effect on judgment, memory, health, and one's ability to manage difficult situations.

What should I do when I am drowsy or fatigued?

Initially, when you stop smoking you may feel tired and fatigued. Gradually, you will enjoy higher energy levels than when smoking.

- Think positively; remember that symptoms of nicotine withdrawal **ARE SIGNS OF RECOVERY from nicotine dependence.**

- Get plenty of rest.
- Pace your physical activities.
- Take breaks. It's okay not to push yourself.
- Ask for help rather than overextending yourself.

What should I do if I have difficulty concentrating?

Because this time is stressful, you may find it more difficult to concentrate. Remember to get plenty of rest, plan pleasant activities when possible, and manage your tasks at a comfortable pace.

- Allow time to prepare for a task and work up to it.
- Simplify your schedule for a few days.
- Take frequent breaks.
- Make a list - prioritize things you can do when you are feeling more rested and energetic.

How do I cope with other symptoms I may have after quitting?

Sleeplessness: You may find drinking a glass of warm milk before bedtime or reading a book will help you relax. Avoid television and decrease how much caffeine you have in items such as coffee, sodas, and chocolate. Your doctor may also recommend sleeping medication.

Coughing: You may begin to cough more as your lungs begin to recover, but the coughing will lessen after a short period of time.

Constipation: Talk with your doctor about this symptom. Eat high-fiber foods such as raw fruits and vegetables, bran, rice and whole grains. Be sure to drink plenty of water!

Sense of loss: Quitting smoking can create a sense that “something is missing.” Cancer also leads to strong feelings of loss. These feelings are difficult to manage, but they are normal. It is helpful to keep focused on your progress, schedule time for pleasant activities, and do things that improve your sense of well-being and personal control at this time. If these feelings persist, seek professional counseling and additional support from family and friends.

Should I still use coping strategies when it gets easier to stay smoke-free?

Yes. As cravings and withdrawal subside, you may find that you don't use your coping strategies as often. But the urge to smoke may still occur from time to time, so use the skills that you have learned when you feel any urge to smoke.

For the first few months, it is helpful to keep yourself from being tested or tempted by tobacco. If you cannot avoid a situation that tempts you to smoke, practice your coping skills in the situation.

START: R = Remove Cigarettes and Tobacco Products from Your Home, Car, and Work

• Before Your Quit Date – Make Smoking Boring

Just sit quietly and smoke. Limit smoking to one place or room. This will help break the associations between smoking and other activities.

• Tell Friends and Family about Your Quit Date

Ask others to be patient and help you over the tough spots during the first days and weeks. Talk to people who can be supportive and spend time with those whose company you enjoy.

• Plan Ahead

Make a plan to keep from smoking and be prepared to use your coping strategies to manage cravings.

- **Change your Daily Routine and Avoid Temptation**

If you usually smoke with your morning coffee, on the drive to work, or other specific occasions during the day, you must change your routine to avoid as many of these high-risk triggers as possible.

- **Try to Engage in Activities that Relax and Reward You**

Make a list of things you would like to do for yourself after quitting. Do things that will lift your mood, distract and comfort you. Do this on your first day and first week off cigarettes. You deserve it!

- **Get Rid of Temptations to Smoke**

Finally, find and discard all cigarettes, and remove matches, lighters and ashtrays. Go through your pockets, kitchen drawers, and your glove compartment. Don't leave yourself any unnecessary temptations that could block you from reaching your goal on Quit Day!

START: T = Talk with your Doctor about Getting Help Quitting Smoking

Before you make a quit attempt, make a list of telephone numbers of people you can call for support, such as family, friends, and the National Toll-Free Tobacco Quitline 1-800-QUIT NOW or 1-800- 784-8669. Keep your telephone list handy for when you may need it. You can put it on your refrigerator and by the telephone for quick reference.

The MSKCC Smoking Cessation Program at 1-212-610-0507 is available to assist you. Our Smoking Cessation Program specializes in dealing with the concerns of cancer patients, cancer survivors, and their family members. We understand the unique challenge of wanting to stop smoking, and dealing with the stress of cancer diagnosis, treatment and the fear of recurrence. Our program is tailored to meet the specific needs of cancer patients and can help patients quit smoking and remain tobacco-free. We can also recommend other psychosocial support services both here at MSKCC and in your community.

Another important tool for quitting is using smoking cessation medicines, which can reduce your urges to smoke and symptoms of nicotine withdrawal.

How do smoking cessation medications work?

- If you have tried to quit smoking before, you know how hard it can be.
- Nicotine alone is not known to cause cancer, but it is very addictive.
- Tobacco and other agents, especially the carcinogens in the smoke, cause cancer, heart disease, and emphysema. Nicotine replacement (i.e., nicotine gum, inhaler, lozenge, nasal spray, and patch) is one type of treatment for smoking. The purpose is to replace the nicotine your body gets from smoking tobacco and gradually reduce your physical dependence on nicotine.
- In addition, bupropion SR (i.e., Wellbutrin SR®, Zyban®), varenicline (i.e. Chantix) and other types of smoking cessation medication can reduce your urges to smoke and symptoms of nicotine withdrawal. Your physician may recommend nicotine replacement, bupropion, varenicline or another medication to assist you in quitting.

These medicines do NOT contain the cancer-causing substances and harmful chemicals found in tobacco smoke. They will help you avoid smoking and make quitting more comfortable. At MSKCC, our doctors and nurses recognize the safety and benefits of using medicines to help cancer patients resist smoking. All smoking cessation medications recommended as part of our smoking cessation strategies have been proven effective in well-controlled studies and are safe for use.

What are the benefits of smoking cessation medicines?

Smoking cessation medicines may aid you to stop smoking because they help to decrease the symptoms associated

with withdrawal and reduce urges to smoke. These symptoms may be difficult to tolerate and often cause people to give up on quitting. All current cessation medications double the chances that you will be able to quit and stay quit.

The medicines that can help with nicotine withdrawal include:

- **Nicotine lozenge**
(Commit®)
- **Nicotine nasal spray**
(Nicotrol®)
- **Nicotine patch**
(NicodermCQ®, Nicotrol®, Habitrol®)
- **Nicotine gum**
(Nicorette®, Nicotrol®)
- **Nicotine inhaler** (Nicotrol®)
- **Bupropion SR pills**
(Zyban®, Wellbutrin SR®)
- **Varenicline pills**
(Chantix®)

What type of smoking cessation medicine is the best for cancer patients?

There may be types of medicines that will work better for you. We can make suggestions based upon your smoking history, cancer, and treatment. For example, patients getting chemotherapy may not be able to use some medications because they may worsen nausea.

Your Quit Date!

Congratulations! Here are five suggestions for your Quit Date:

- Get rid of any remaining reminders of your smoking (cigarettes, lighters, ashtrays).
- Avoid temptation – review and use the coping strategies you have selected from this guide. Seek alternate, healthy ways of relaxing.
- Remind your friends and family that today is your **Quit Date**.
- Reward yourself – treat yourself special during your first month off cigarettes.
- Plan to celebrate the day you became a non-smoker each month hereafter!

Staying a Non-Smoker

- A “slip” is when someone who has quit smoking has had a puff or a few cigarettes right after treatment but does not return back to their regular smoking habit.
- “Relapse” is when someone who has quit smoking resumes smoking one or more cigarettes a day for a week or beyond a week.
- Slips are “red flags” that put the ex-smoker at risk for relapse.

There are seven common situations below that can lead to a cigarette slip or full smoking relapse. Be aware of these and plan ways to avoid smoking if you are tempted.

1. **Negative feelings:** People, situations, events and emotions can trigger smoking. People often smoke to manage stress or deal with unpleasant feelings. Depression, anxiety and anger can cause urges to smoke and result in relapse if you aren't prepared to cope with these emotions in other ways.
2. **Positive feelings:** Many smokers say they enjoy smoking, so when they quit, they lose a source of pleasure and comfort. Positive emotions can also trigger smoking. About 25% of relapsing smokers start smoking again when they feel happy, calm or relaxed.

3. **Withdrawal symptoms:** Most nicotine withdrawal symptoms last a short time, but they can be unpleasant and lead to relapse. Smoking cessation medications will help lessen your withdrawal symptoms and body's dependence on nicotine.
4. **Alcohol:** When you drink, you are more likely to give in to cravings to smoke. Avoid alcohol for the first month or so after your quit date.
5. **Relaxing/after meals:** For many people, relaxing after a meal is often paired with smoking. Make a list of alternate strategies you can use if finishing a meal is a smoking trigger for you.
6. **Social situations:** Giving up cigarettes when you are with other smokers may feel like a loss, so be prepared. Celebrating with friends, especially those who smoke may lead you to let your guard down. Either keep your time with other smokers limited, or ask if they can avoid smoking in your presence. Excusing yourself if you feel very tempted is always a way out.
7. **Recovery from cancer or treatment:** Many patients stop smoking after cancer diagnosis, or especially before surgery. Some people are tempted to smoke once they recover from treatment, start feeling better, and begin to resume their usual routine. Use this time to alter your routine, increase pleasant activities, and avoid your smoking triggers. Remember the peace of mind you get from protecting your health.

What if I have a smoking slip?

Don't panic! A slip is telling you something. Try to figure out what contributed to the slip. Problem-solve, ask yourself:

- Was I in a high-risk situation, such as being with smoking friends at a social event or feeling overly-stressed? Did I anticipate the high-risk situation and prepare or rehearse my coping strategies? What prevented me from identifying and preparing for high-risk situations?
- Was I experiencing nicotine withdrawal symptoms? If using nicotine replacement, was I using it as prescribed or at the correct dose?
- Was my motivation flagging? If so, could I have boosted it by reviewing my reasons for quitting? Did I use positive self-talk?

Do get back on track by quitting smoking again. Slips may happen, although avoiding them is the best policy because they are temptations to full relapse. After problem-solving, put a plan into action to anticipate high-risk situations. Think about whether you find it best to avoid these situations altogether or face them using your best coping strategies. Remember to use coping strategies, such as positive self-coaching and engaging in a distracting activity to increase your chances for future success.

What if I relapse?

- Throw away any cigarettes you still have.
- Tell yourself that you have tried to quit and what you learned about yourself and the nicotine habit.
- Think about times when you learned a new skill, such as riding a bicycle or using a computer. You didn't just master these new skills in one try—some learning was trial and error, and figuring out as you went along what worked and what didn't. So learning to live life without cigarettes also requires sticking with it and trying new strategies that help you cope effectively with temptations to smoke.
- Don't beat yourself up! Look out for global negative statements about yourself, such as "I'll never quit," or "I'm a loser/failure." Challenge these statements for their accuracy, i.e., can you really predict the future such that you are certain it is impossible for you to quit?
- Cancer patients who slip can experience strong feelings of guilt and shame, or keep their smoking from their loved ones and health care providers. If you slip, you should discuss it with your health care team to prevent health-related complications. Think about what led to the slip and relapse and figure out other strategies to use instead.

- It may be time to develop a stronger action plan. If you are unsure of why you relapsed and how to get back on track, consult the Smoking Cessation Program at MSKCC. We're here to help!
- Review the smoke-free strategies in this guide.
- Set a new quit date and start again. You are one step closer to achieving your goal.

Do Keep Trying! Success = Persistence + Learning from Experience. You Can Succeed!

Looking Ahead

We hope that you have found this guide to be useful, and that it has helped you to plan and follow through with your goal of quitting smoking.

From time to time, reviewing the strategies and suggestions recommended in this guide can assist you in staying a non-smoker.

It is never too late to gain awareness and mastery over nicotine dependency and to enjoy the benefits of being a non-smoker.

Bibliography and Resources

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center Smoking Cessation Program

www.mskcc.org (Click on prevention and screening)
1-212-610-0507

National Tobacco Quitline
www.smokefree.gov
1-800-QUIT NOW or 1-800-784-8669
For referral to community based cessation programs

National Cancer Institute/Cancer Information Service
<http://cis.nci.nih.gov/>
1-800-4-CANCER or 1-800-422-6237

American Cancer Society
www.cancer.org
1-800-ACS-2345 or 1-800-227-2345

American Lung Association
www.lungusa.org
1-800-LUNG-USA or 1-800-586-4872

American Heart Association
www.americanheart.org
1-800-242-8721

Office of Smoking & Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/tobacco
1-800-CDC-1311 or 1-770-488-5705

USDHHS, National Cancer Institute (2003). Clearing the Air. Quit Smoking Today.



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