

## Cessation / Support for Employees Who Use Tobacco

### **Quitting Resources - Supporting Employees that Want to Quit:**

#### **Call [QuitlineNC](#)**

**1-800-QUIT-NOW** (1-800-784-8669)

TTY# 1-877-777-6534

- Open from 8:00 a.m. until 3 a.m., seven days a week.
- Services are available to all North Carolinians.
- Expert Tobacco Quit Coaches can make follow-up calls.
- English, Spanish and a translation service for most other languages is available.
- All calls are free and confidential.

#### **Medication Resources for Quitting Tobacco**

Nicotine is a powerful drug and the addiction to it is difficult to break. There are, however, many products on the market – both over-the-counter and by prescription – to help you quit, and many people have found them to be useful. These products are described here, along with their benefits and side effects. As with all types of medication, it is important to follow your doctor's advice and use products only according to the label, or as prescribed.

#### **QuitlineNC Brochure**

Print this full color brochure and make it available in waiting rooms, worksites, housing complexes, at community events, at your church or synagogue - wherever tobacco users live, work or play. This document is in PDF format.

#### **QuitLineNC.com**

This is the QuitlineNC web page. Click here to listen to people who have successfully quit tobacco using the quitline. If you are a healthcare provider, there is information on how you can refer your patients to QuitlineNC to help them quit.

#### **Smokefree.gov**

The National Cancer Institute website provides Instant Messaging cessation counseling as well as printable materials.

#### **MakeSmokingHistory.org**

This website offers a "QUIT Wizard" Program that provides tools, personalized features and a Bulletin Board to give you the support you need to quit or to help someone else quit. Registration is required. Multilingual support and information available.

#### **Quitnet.com**

Quitnet.com is an interactive online community that provides smoking cessation support. Registration is required.

#### **ChewFree.com**

This site assists people who want to quit using chewing tobacco or snuff. It was developed as part of a research project funded by the National Institutes of Health. Registration is required.



## **My Last Dip**

Unique Web-based interventions that have been designed to help chewing tobacco users quit for good. One program for chewers ages 14-25 and another program for ages 26 and up. MyLastDip research projects are free to use.

## **BecomeAnEx**

BecomeAnEx.org strives to help you identify your triggers...any time, place, activity or person can trigger your desire to smoke. Once your triggers are identified, BecomeAnEx.org provides resources to teach you how to deal with these urges without smoking. Information is available in English and Spanish.

## **Freedom from Smoking Online**

Freedom from smoking is the American Lung Association's online, web-based smoking cessation program. Registration is required. Information is available in English and Spanish.

## **Facts about Nicotine:**

Nicotine is a psychoactive substance, meaning that it is a chemical that alters brain function, resulting in temporary changes in perception, mood, consciousness, or behavior. Nicotine is very rapidly absorbed into the bloodstream, producing almost immediate effects on the brain. When smoked, it can reach the brain in about eight seconds. Cigarettes are a highly efficient drug delivery system, and the average smoker gets about one or two mg of nicotine per cigarette.

In products that are either not smoked (chew or snuff) or not inhaled (cigars, pipes, etc), nicotine is absorbed through the mucous membrane of the mouth or nose. This tends to be a slower absorption but nicotine levels can still reach peak levels in the bloodstream. Nicotine can also be absorbed directly through the skin. <sup>i</sup>

## **Facts about Addiction:**

Generally, an addiction is a recurring compulsion by an individual to engage in some specific activity, even when faced with negative consequences. The term is often reserved for drug addictions (including tobacco/nicotine) but it is sometimes applied to other scenarios, such as problem gambling and compulsive overeating.

Nicotine addiction is both physical and behavioral, which makes it extremely hard to break the dependence. Physically, the body will go through withdrawal when nicotine levels drop. Behaviorally, the feel, smell, or sight of a tobacco product and the ritual of obtaining, handling, and using that product are all associated with the pleasurable effects of tobacco use. These behaviors can create cravings and can make withdrawal worse. <sup>i ii</sup>

## **Facts about Withdrawal:**

Withdrawal is related to the absence of the addictive substance, such as nicotine. These symptoms may begin within a few hours of last use, but typically peak within the first few days and begin to subside within a few weeks. Cravings for nicotine may last significantly longer.

The “relaxing” effect that nicotine provides is not due to physical relaxation; rather, it is the elimination of early withdrawal symptoms. <sup>ii</sup>

Some symptoms of nicotine withdrawal include:

- Irritability
- Cravings
- Poor concentration
- Sleep disturbances

- Increased appetite
- Headache
- Fatigue

## **Facts about Quitting:**

Evidence shows that the most successful approach to quitting smoking/tobacco use is a combination of behavioral counseling and FDA approved medications. Tobacco use is both an addiction and a habit. Medication will help lessen your physical cravings while coaching will work with you to find ways to break habits associated with using tobacco and cope without reaching for a cigarette or a chew. People who use a combination of behavioral coaching with evidence based tobacco treatment medications triple their chances of quitting successfully over people who try to quit on their own.

Below are ways to help you through this process, but remember you do not have to quit alone:

- *Identify reasons you want to quit.* To improve your health, for a loved one, so that you can enjoy playing sports or seeing a grandchild graduate...anything that motivates you. This can remind you why you want to quit.
- *Get support.* Whether from a family member, a friend, or by calling QuitlineNC, you can get the support you need to help you quit using tobacco. Success rates are much higher for tobacco users who have multiple forms of support while trying to break the addiction.
- *Talk to your physician or a pharmacist about tobacco treatment medications.* Some medications are prescription, others are over the counter.
- *Make a plan.* Start by setting a quit date and tell your family, friends and co-workers so that they can support you in your attempt to quit using tobacco products. Think about the challenges you will face and how you can handle these challenges.
- *Get rid of the temptation.* Remove all tobacco products, ashtrays, lighters and other things associated with tobacco use from your environment.
- *Learn from what you have done in the past.* Most tobacco users take several times before they quit and stay quit. If you learn from your past successes and slips, you are more likely to succeed this time.

Fiore MC, Bailey WC, Cohen SJ, et al. (2008) Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence. Clinical Practice Guideline. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Public Health Service.

## **Benefits of Quitting:**

- 20 minutes after quitting, your heart rate drops.
- 12 hours after quitting, carbon monoxide levels in your blood drops to normal.
- 2 weeks to 3 months after quitting, your heart attack risk begins to drop. Your lung function begins to improve.
- 1 to 9 months after quitting, your coughing and shortness of breath decrease.
- 1 year after quitting, your added risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker's.
- 5 years after quitting, your stroke risk is reduced to that of a nonsmoker's 5 - 15 years after quitting.
- 10 years after quitting, your lung cancer death rate is about half that of a smoker's. Your risk of cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney and pancreas decreases.
- 15 years after quitting, your risk of coronary heart disease is back to that of a nonsmoker's.

Compared to smokers, your...

- Stroke risk is reduced to that of a person who never smoked after 5 to 15 years of not smoking.

- Cancers of the mouth, throat, and esophagus risks are halved 5 years after smoking.
- Cancer of the larynx risk is reduced after quitting.
- Coronary heart disease risk is cut by half 1 year after quitting and is nearly the same as someone who never smoked 15 years after quitting.
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease risk of death is reduced after you quit.
- Lung cancer risk drops by as much as half 10 years after quitting.
- Ulcer risk drops after quitting.
- Bladder cancer risk is halved a few years after quitting.
- Peripheral artery disease goes down after quitting.
- Cervical cancer risk is reduced a few years after quitting.
- Low birthweight baby risk drops to normal if you quit before pregnancy or during your first trimester. <sup>iii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse, InfoFacts: Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products, June 2007  
<http://www.drugabuse.gov/Infofacts/Tobacco.html>

<sup>ii</sup> NIDA, Research Report Series, Tobacco Addiction, July 2006  
<http://www.drugabuse.gov/researchreports/nicotine/nicotine.html>

<sup>iii</sup> Content source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office on Smoking and Health  
Publications available: [http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/osh\\_pub\\_catalog/PublicationList.aspx](http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/osh_pub_catalog/PublicationList.aspx)

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