

# Stop Smoking Checklist

*Here are a few suggestion to help you. Do what you want and leave the rest.*

## **Getting Ready: Two weeks before you quit**

- Make a personal pact with yourself to quit.
  - Pick a date for quitting completely.
  - Write down the three most important reasons for quitting on a card. Look at it several times each day so you don't forget why you planned to quit.
  - Call the FREE California Smokers Helpline at 1-800-No-Butts and get a personal quit coach to help you. You deserve it. This service is paid for by taxes you have paid on your cigarettes!
  - Prior to quitting, stop smoking in two or three of the situations where you normally have a cigarette, like after a meal, talking on the phone, in traffic. Plan to do something else.
  - Cut down on the number of cigarettes you smoke per day, for example, cut down by one cigarette every other day.
  - Change your brand of cigarettes to something you don't like - For good!
  - Discard your lighter, use matches. Carry your cigarettes in a different pocket or purse.
  - Spend a little time each day picturing stressful events in your mind, and you not smoking.
  - Talk with your doctor about using the patch, gum, lozenge, bupropion, varenicline, inhaler, or nasal spray . The first five are generally covered by Medi-Cal.
- Often it helps to use combination patch and gum where you use the gum for breakthrough cravings.

## **Actually quitting: The first two weeks**

- Get rid of all cigarettes! Put away all smoking-related objects, such as ashtrays. Ask people you live with not to smoke in your presence for at least two weeks.
- Spend as much time as possible with friends who don't smoke and people who will support you.
- Keep busy doing things you enjoy, especially evenings and weekends.
- Avoid "high risk" situations, such as parties and groups of smoking friends.
- Spend lots of time in places that prohibit or discourage smoking, like theaters and libraries.
- Drink plenty of water to clean the poisons out.
- Don't overeat sugary foods. Use ice water, fruits and veggies, sugarless gum, mouthwash, or brushing your teeth to keep your hands and mouth busy.
- Increase your activity level, something simple like a 10 minute walk each day.
- When you have withdrawal symptoms like irritability or cravings:
  1. Remind yourself why you are quitting (use your card).
  2. Remind yourself that your discomfort is only a tiny fraction of the discomfort associated with continued smoking, like shortness of breath, heart attack or cancer.
  3. Practice deep breathing, yoga or other relaxation techniques.
  4. If you are having a lot of symptoms, check with your provider (nurse practitioner, physician's assistant or doctor) about writing a prescription for the patch, gum, lozenge, bupropion, varenicline, inhaler, or nasal spray. If you already have a prescription and you are having a lot of symptoms you may need a medication change by your provider.
- Remind yourself that you can be free of yellow nails, smelling like cigarettes, and wasting

money on tobacco.

## **Staying quit: After two weeks**

- Remind yourself that urges to smoke are linked to people, places and feelings, and to being around cigarettes.
- When you do have an urge to smoke, remember that it only lasts a few minutes, distract yourself, and leave the situation if you need to. Consider calling a tobacco free friend who supports you.
- After each urge to smoke has passed, give yourself a pat on the back! You have just made progress. If you do smoke – you don't have to quit quitting just take the next right action and stop smoking again and get support.
- Save the money you spent on cigarettes in a special fund and then buy something nice for yourself.
- Be sure you are doing more fun things each day.

## **Staying quit: After two months**

- Be extra careful when unusual life events occur, like birthdays, graduations, weddings, holidays and vacations. Make a plan in advance of how you will avoid losing your commitment.
- Be extra careful when stressful life events occur, like relationship difficulties, money, school or work problems get support. Consider free Nicotine Anonymous for more support if you are struggling. It is like AA for people who smoke.
- Remind yourself often that staying quit is probably the most important gift you can give yourself.
- Remind yourself often that you can not smoke not even one puff one day at a time.
- Never think that you are out of danger and you can have a cigarette or two. It's easy to start again.
- If you slip and have one or more cigarettes, do not conclude that "all is lost." Stop smoking immediately, get all the help you can and learn from your experience. Don't be afraid to go back to your provider for more or different medication or call the Helpline for the first time or call back for more help. It is normal for it to take a few tries. You are not alone and help is available!
- If you are concerned about gaining weight, step up your physical activity program and consider getting help.
- Each time you see a cigarette, remind yourself why you quit. Also remember that a powerful industry spends 2.3 million dollars each day (2014 data) trying to manipulate people like you into being chained to a cigarette again.

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