

**Quit Smoking  
Right Now!**

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## **Introduction**

Smoking as a habit has been prevalent over decades now. Smoking has been around and has been used as a stress buster for a long time. Popularized by the cinema in the early times smoking often was regarded as a style statement. Many claim that it calms them down in pressure situations and helps them deal with stress better. However, it is a dangerous habit, and once addicted it may result in several physical and health issues which may even lead to a person's death.

## **What you should know about Smoking: Making an Informed Choice**

If you are a smoker, 'Quit Smoking' is the most common advice that you must have received from friends, family, relatives and other well wishers. However, quitting smoking is not the easiest thing to do especially when almost everyone around you seems to be a smoker. Though more than 4 million people die every year due to smoking and related illnesses, smoking is very rampant among people of all ages, especially because of the stressful and extravagant lifestyle that we lead in today's age. In offices and other corporate houses, smoking has almost become a symbol of status and intellect, where people bond over smoke breaks, while for the youth, mainly teenagers it is one of the 'ultra cool' things to do. Hence despite, several awareness campaigns and programs by various NGOs to make people aware of the ill effects of smoking, it is falling flat. In fact statistics show that each year more and more number of people die of smoking alone than by all kinds of accidents put together.

While often it starts with smoking once in a while, inevitably a person gets addicted and finds it very difficult to quit. It is all the more worse for athletes and people with sports backgrounds to be smoking since it affects their body even more adversely. Smoking can result in some diseases like emphysema, heart diseases, diseases of the coronary arteries, and many other ailments. It also results in discoloration of the lips, psoriasis, ulcers amongst many others. Smoking is also the most common cause for cancer and thus is one of the main causes of the maximum number of cancer related deaths all over the world.

So we see that smoking causes numerous health issues, however what we mostly don't take into account is the amount of harm it causes to those around us. In fact passive smokers are affected worse due to the fact that they inhale the smoke that is let out along with a large amount of carbon-di-oxide by the smoker. Not only that, if you are a smoker your child is more likely to suffer from various respiratory disorders like asthma, bronchitis, and other respiratory infections.

So the next time you light a 'cancer stick', as cigarettes are commonly referred to, know that it does immense amount of harm to your body and is probably not worth it to help you relieve temporary stress. Quitting smoking is perhaps the only way to repair the damage that is caused to your body due to smoking. However like all smokers will agree this is not an easy task, because your motivation and will power have to be extremely strong. Though major ill effects of smoking are not very apparent, it causes irreparable damage to the body in the long run.

## **Smoking in relation to Women**

Smoking in general is a terrible practice and is actively discouraged both among men and women. However in women the damage caused by smokes is by far huger than the damage caused to men.

This is especially true if the woman is pregnant. The side effects are often seen to affect the child in the mother's womb and more often than not cause severe complications in childbirth.

### **How smoking affects the fetus**

If a pregnant mother smokes, the smoke directly affects the fetus and hampers its normal growth and development. According to research smoking is the primary cause for ectopic pregnancy, where the fertilized egg gets implanted outside the womb. Because of this there is not only an increased chance of miscarriage but also several complications like vaginal bleeding, abnormal placental implantation, premature delivery and in many cases also leads to sudden death of the child.

### **How smoking may cause still death of the child and/or premature delivery**

Nicotine, obtained from tobacco and carbon-mono-oxide which is produced as a by-product of smoking often act in combination with each other and is responsible for lowering the oxygen supply to the baby, which inevitably results in premature delivery or in a still born child.

### **How smoking may affect the birth weight of a child**

Smoking is believed to be the main cause of children born with a very low weight, because smoking is instrumental in reducing the weight of the baby inside the mother's womb, because it does not allow the necessary amount of nutrients to reach the child. Children born to mothers who smoked during pregnancy weighed almost 225 grams lighter than those born to non-smoking mothers.

### **How smoking hampers brain functioning**

Studies conducted show that brain development and functioning in a child growing inside the mother's womb is adversely affected if the mother has been smoking during her pregnancy. It may be the cause of various types of disorders later faced by the child like learning disorders, low IQ levels in the child and many other behavioral problems. Thus it is imperative that expectant mothers do not smoke and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Smoking not only is the cause of several disorders and complications for both the mother and the child but also has several other harmful implications for a woman's body. Regular smoking among women may lead to severe cases of lung cancer as well as other respiratory disorders. Suffocation and ailments of the throat are also commonly seen in women who smoke regularly. Excessive yawning due to lack of oxygen, shortness of breath or noisy breathing, nervousness, sinusitis, coughing and hoarseness are other common problems faced by women due to years of smoking. In fact, research reveals that smoking makes the fluid inside the lungs more prone to damage, even after 48 hours of smoking. Nicotine is known to cause irreparable damage to the lungs, the kidneys, liver and brain functioning. Hence it is imperative to get rid of the toxins that get accumulated inside the body for a woman to stay healthy. To do so, you could practice breathing exercises, which is one of the most recommended solutions. Also try to avoid being around people who are smokers as passive smoking is equally if not more harmful. Turmeric is a widely recommended supplement that helps the body get rid of the tobacco related toxins. The harmful effects of a cigarette or other tobacco related fumes are very well negated by turmeric. Studies also show that increased physical activity is something that triggers brain activity and therefore regular physical exercise can help to control the cravings for a smoke. Moreover smoking is a terrible habit that harms the skin most

adversely. It clogs the pores of the skin and hence does not allow the skin to flush out the toxins thus resulting in the outbreak of acne in various forms like pimples, zits, rashes etc. Hence to maintain a healthy skin it is a good idea to give up smoking. Another phenomenon that is seen very commonly among women is that of fatigue. Women tend to get tired very soon and In fact smoking worsens the condition; it decreases the endurance and the energy levels and robs you off your stamina as well.

Here you also need to keep in mind that foods made from flour and refined sugar in the daily diet aggravates the disorders stimulated by smoking. The sinus and the nasal cavities get further congested with these food items and this slowly proceeds towards the lungs over a long period of time. Moreover remember that smoking causes the body to lose certain vitamins like Vitamin C and hence they should be consumed with the diet in the form of supplements to maintain the required levels of Vitamin C within the body at optimum levels.

Thus we see that smoking may be the cause of different complications and ailments among women and robs the body of some the most nutritional elements. Hence it is a good idea to stay away from it.

## **Smoking in relation to Men**

Men are at as much risk because of smoking as are women. This is worse in case of men because smoking is a habit that thrives more commonly among the men and causes various disorders in the body which could even be fatal. Studies have shown that smoking is the most usual cause for disorders like impotency and cancer and can leave the man's whole life impaired, apart from being the cause of a whole bunch of other respiratory and heart disorders. Discoloration of the lips and darkening of the gums, along with stains on the teeth and mouth ulcers are commonly seen effects of smoking seen in men. It also is the main reason because of which the arteries which connect to the heart and the male organs gets clogged resulting in various disorders of the heart and is also the main cause several other mental and physical problems.

In fact smoking is known to cause irreparable and irreversible damage to the body. Problems like impotency and erectile dysfunction can be traced back to excessive smoking habits. This is because smoking causes blockage of the vessels that supplies blood to the genitals. Though most of the side effects of smoking are common for both men and women there are certain side effects which affects only men. Sexual health is the most affected in case of men apart from various other psychological and physical disorders. It also increases the risk of cancer and various other heart diseases and strokes. Another attribute of smoking is the fact that it increases anxiety levels though the common myth is that smoking is a stress buster. Memory is also adversely affected due to excessive smoking as smoke gradually over time kills the brain cells. Smoking is also the primary cause for increased nervousness and reduces the sharpness levels of an individual, and makes the person forgetful and careless.

## **Aids that Help to Quit Smoking:**

Like we are all well aware, quitting smoking is not the easiest task. It always starts with a smoke here and there and the person eventually ends up getting addicted. And like any other addiction, getting rid of nicotine addiction also requires a strict schedule and a lot of will power. In fact nicotine addiction is the worst among all addictions because it doesn't cause tangible harm like most other drugs but causes slow death. Being one of the worst addictions there are several aids that are available in the market that will assist you in your efforts to quit smoking. While nicotine patches and nicotine gums are the most commonly used ways to help get rid of this terrible habit, there are some other very effective methods that help to quit smoking.

First and foremost you need to be aware of the pitfalls of smoking and the amount of damage that bit may cause. Since unlike most other drugs smoking does not have very apparent side effects, the awareness about the evils of smoking are either less known or not paid heed upon. So, most importantly you need to first read up all you can about the pitfalls of smoking so that your resolve to quit smoking becomes even stronger. Apart from nicotine patches and nicotine gums that are known to reduce the urge of smoking by providing sufficient amounts of nicotine to reduce the cravings. However the most effective way to reduce smoking still remains being updated about the harmful side effects of smoking. Awareness works as the best hindrance. So the next time you feel like a smoke, goggle the harmful effects of smoking. The more you read up and update yourself about the extent of harm you are causing to your body, your urge to smoke will automatically go down. Try to locate a few videos, as well as compare pictures of the lungs of a smoker to that of a non-smoker. The sheer shock of what you see is a good enough aid to keep smoking at bay.

One of the best aids to quit smoking is visualization. Visualization actually is exposing yourself to graphic images of the actual damage that can be caused due to these cancer sticks. In fact it is the same theory that applied to the warning sign that appears on a packet of smokes. May argue that the usual placed on the cigarette packets are not jarring enough and to actually drive a smoker to quit the images have to be far more disturbing and should involve graphic details. The idea is to plant terrifying thoughts in your mind related to smoking, so that each time you crave for a smoke this imagery automatically comes up in your mind and puts your mind off smoking. This is especially true for chain smokers because whether people admit it or not they are well aware of the fact that smoking is gradually eating up the body from inside, the worst part being that you will not even know till it is too late. Though visualization it is quite likely for anyone to want to give up smoking.

Another well researched way of quitting smoking involves drinking water every time you have an urge to smoke. Studies conducted have shown that drinking water whenever you feel like smoking reduces your urge to smoke. This might seem a little difficult at the beginning because the natural urge for a smoker will be to want to give up, but if you are at it for at least three weeks the urge to smoke will reduce automatically.

Another usually suggested method is called the 'Money jar method'. Money is one of the major drivers for most people and each time you smoke you end up spending a lot of money. So what is done instead is that each time you want to smoke put away an equivalent amount (equal to the cost of a smoke) in a money jar. This way you know that with each smoke that you are sacrificing you end up saving money. The amount of money that you would have saved up by the end of the month will

surprise you. This method is a great motivator however the drawback is that it only works with people who are very monetarily driven.

Detoxification or medical cleaning is the most often used method to get rid of smoking. First of all you need to pay a visit to a professional detox centre or a smoking detox centre to make sure that your body is rid of all toxins that had accumulated owing to smoking. Once your body is free of the toxins you need to make a genuine effort to give up the habit. This also includes cleaning up your house and getting rid of all the smoke paraphernalia that you own. Once your body is clean your house should also be free of toxins.

Chewing gums is an alternative to smoking that you could adopt. Chewing gums will keep your mouth busy and will also reduce the urge to smoke. Apart from these there are several breathing exercises that are known to be extremely beneficial in helping to get rid of the habit. You could practice these breathing exercises instead of inhaling smoke. These exercises help to remove the toxins from the body and clear out the lungs. Yoga is also known to be helpful in these regards.

Another method that couples often apply in an attempt to quit smoking is to kiss their partners. Usually the smell of smoke is a big turn off for most people and kissing the partner each time you feel like a smoke could help you stay away from smoking altogether.

Free aids are available everywhere and seek help from your friends and family in your efforts. Go for walks early in the morning; the morning air is fresh and relatively pollution free and is great for the lungs. You could also join a no smoking club, as this will give you an opportunity to interact with others who are trying to give up the same habit. Interacting with like minded people with the same goals often proves to be beneficial. Eat healthy and focus on exercising, losing weight and keep your mind away from smoking. You could also chose to go to a therapist to help you quit smoking because the therapist will take you through an organized regime, and you will also have someone to support you in your attempts to give up this fatal habit.

## **Advantages of Quitting Smoking**

When nicotine enters your body it causes a lot of physical changes. Though smoking may help you temporarily deal with stress, the damage that it causes to the body is too much to bargain for.

What starts off with one cigarette once in a while, does not take time to become ten and then twenty smokes a day and there is no stopping. It often becomes so bad that people prefer smoking to eating. Gradually not only the number of smokes but also the time span of smoking increases. However, the worst part is that since the damages that the smoke is doing to your body is not very apparent so the habit is taken very casually. What most people do not realize is that it is killing them slowly. It is only when you quit smoking that you can tell the difference.

Research shows that once it has been 1 hour since you last smoked your body automatically starts the process of self healing. At this stage the carbon mono oxide and nicotine levels in the blood start to decline at an increasing rate. The heart, lungs and other organs of the body begin to repair themselves. It is likely that you will have a strong urge to smoke after not having smoked for a few hours, but this is mainly due to the addiction. However what smokers need to understand is that the healing process starts once you have not smoked for a few hours and will continue over time. You

may face withdrawal pangs however what you need to keep in mind is that this is only a part of the recovery process and hence the pangs will subside with time.

People who quit smoking might experience sore gums or tongue as well as dryness in the mouth. They tend to feel edgy and cranky, and may also temporarily gain weight. This temporary increase in weight is mostly caused mainly due to fluid retention in the body. During the initial period after having quit smoking they tend to feel more tired and hungry than usual. They may have trouble sleeping and also may become short tempered. Soon after having quit smoking people tend to cough a lot and all of these though may seem to be adverse reactions by the body are actually signs of the body clearing itself of nicotine and all other toxins accumulated in the body due to smoking.

Nicotine is a very strong addictive element that is used in smokes and it takes the body about two to three days to detoxify itself of all toxins. In fact it is in this period that the cravings and the pangs are the worst post which they subside and there is a substantial improvement in the health conditions of the individual. An immediate change that is felt in almost half an hour of having quit smoking is a drop in the blood pressure levels, whereby it becomes natural. As a result there is a drop in the pulse rate as well, which also drops to natural; while the body temperature of the hands and feet increases to a certain extent and becomes natural.

However perceptible changes can be noticed in the body only almost 8 hours after you have last smoked. By then the carbon mono oxide level of the blood drops to normal as well as the oxygen levels in the blood increase to natural. In fact the healing process starts so soon that almost after 24 hours of having quit smoking there is a considerable reduction in the chances of the person having a heart attack. In about two days after having quit smoking most of the nerve endings begin to re-grow and the ability to smell and taste that usually deteriorate over time with smoking, get enhanced. In fact within a period of a few weeks to a month the blood circulation in the body improves drastically, and so does the stamina. Lung function is known to increase by at least 30% than before. With time, symptoms like fatigue and shortness of breath also reduce to almost nil. Between about a month to nine months of having quit smoking there is a specific improvement in the degree of sinus congestion and the coughing patterns also change. In this period the cilia present inside the lungs also repair themselves and begin regeneration and thus the ability of the lungs to deal with mucus, and reduce infections improves. Thus your body will be lesser and lesser affected by chronic diseases of the lungs like common cold etc. Moreover the most drastic change that is noticed is in the overall energy level of the body which seems to have drastically improved.

After a year from having quit smoking your chances of suffering from a heart disease or suffering a stroke or a heart attack, becomes less than half as compared to a smoker. In fact the risk of a stroke after not smoking for about a year is anywhere between 5-15 times lesser than that of a smoker. The risks of mouth, esophagus and throat cancer are also reduced to half. In fact for people who have successfully quit smoking for ten years the chances of death due to lung cancer is as low as in non-smokers. Quitting smoking also helps to replace the precancerous cells as a result of which the chances of cancers of the kidneys, bladder, esophagus, throat and pancreas falls to a minimum.



## Relevant facts about quitting smoking

Smoking is responsible for the maximum number of deaths every year all over the globe. According to world statistics smoking causes approximately 130,000 deaths due to cancer, more than 1, 70,000 deaths due to various heart diseases which are a direct result of smoking, and 50,000 or so deaths from various lung diseases alone. Hence though smoking may provide temporary relief from stress, it has absolutely no benefits in the long run, as can be seen from the statistics alone. Any form of smokes, like cigarettes, cigars, and all other related products are addictive in nature and hence though you may start with one smoke here and there, eventually you will end up getting addicted to it. Hence those who quit smoking abruptly often go through withdrawal pangs that are accompanied by food cravings, depression, sleeplessness, and jittery nerves among others. Though these symptoms may be difficult to deal with in the first few days of having quit smoking, you must also remember here that these are also positive symptoms indicating that the body is getting rid of the toxins and is detoxifying itself. These symptoms gradually fade out over the next few weeks and what is left is better health conditions. This is the reason why doctors often suggest abruptly quitting smoking to gradually reducing the amount of nicotine intake because in the latter scenario you will tend to continue being dependant on nicotine to a certain extent. However a situation where addiction to smoking is also related to an addiction to alcohol as is seen in many people, or an addiction to some other drugs you are faced with a more difficult situation. In such cases you have to seek professional treatment in a rehabilitation centre. Though most rehabilitation centers do not provide inpatient treatments for addiction to nicotine, in situations where the addiction is associated with any other addiction like that of alcohol or other drugs or the addiction has taken a wrong turn rehabs are the best option. Treatment of these cravings involves the usage of gums or nicotine patches. Sometimes, when the cravings are very intense chemical drugs clonidine along with other anti-depressants such as fluoxetine and buspirone are also used. The Food and Drug Association has also approved the use of drugs like Bupropion or Zyban to effectively treat nicotine addiction. In fact statistics show that usage of these drugs accelerates the treatment of nicotine addiction, and physicians usually try to use a combination of these methods to increase the success rate of the treatment. The trick here is that most drugs like Bupropion that are used in the treatment procedure is not addictive in nature and hence are recommended to deal with the withdrawal symptoms. It has been proven that nicotine itself has anti-depressant properties and this is one of the key reasons why a lot of people get hooked to smoking when going through distressed times. Hence the use of clinically approved anti-depressants to treat a person going through withdrawal symptoms may prove to be very useful. One of the most recommended solutions when trying to quit smoking is to seek assistance of a health care provider. They will give you constant guidance in terms of how to quit smoking. Those who have already taken the first few steps can also benefit from the health care providers in terms of support and correct medication during withdrawals, since withdrawals are known to be the worst phase as well as the phase where most people give up.

## **Some Quick Tips and Tricks that will help you quit smoking**

Like we all know quitting smoking successfully is not an easy task. It requires a very strong resolution as well as a very resolute will power to stick to the decision to quit. Though smoking might seem to provide relief under pressure situations, by now you already know how harmful it is for the body. I'll give you a list of simple tips and tricks that will definitely help you in your efforts. You need to choose the one that best suits your needs:

### **Deep breathing:**

Practicing deep breathing is one of the best known methods that help to avoid or quit smoking altogether. These are also known as various '*asana*' and are very effective in getting rid of the toxins that accumulate in the body owing to smoking. These '*asana*' not only help to reduce the cravings of the body for a smoke but are also instrumental in letting the lungs absorb as much fresh air as it can. In fact every time you feel like a smoke you should practice deep breathing. The basic method that is very beneficial is deeply breathing in a lungful of air and then slowly exhaling it. Purse your lips while exhaling so that you let the air out in a slow, controlled manner. Gradually let your chin rest on your chest and keep your eyes closed while thinking calming thoughts, and visualizing the tension gradually disappearing. This method is a variation of yoga and proves to be very beneficial in controlling strong nicotine cravings.

### **Fluid Consumption**

Drinking lots of fluid during the first few days of trying to quit smoking proves to be very effective in controlling nicotine pangs. Make sure that you drink at least three liters of water a day, to make sure that your body remains hydrated. This would help to flush out the toxins from nicotine and the other poisons that have accumulated in the body over time and will make you feel rejuvenated and will keep you fresh. It will also help to improve blood circulation and give you a healthier looking skin. In most cases the urge to smoke lasts only a few minutes and it is suggested that you drink water whenever you get this urge; that will help the urge to pass. However intake of fluids does not mean you increase the consumption of alcohol, coffee or any sugary drinks because they aggravate the want to smoke. Lot of people also shift attention to unhealthy eating habits like eating too much of fatty or junk food in order to reduce the nicotine cravings but it is always a very bad idea to battle one addiction with another. Also keep in mind that you need to avoid foods with a high concentration of fats because your metabolism is bound to slow down once you have stopped providing nicotine to your system. Hence when you are contemplating giving up smoking also remember that your diet also needs to be kept under control.

Chewing gums or sucking on a cinnamon stick can also be very helpful in these scenarios. Another option to avoid smoking would be to drink a cup of mint tea, or use a peppermint candy.

### **Various Oral Substitutes:**

Oral substitutes can also be an alternative to smoking. In fact the benefits oral substitutes have over nicotine is that they are not addictive in nature and hence they won't be as harmful. However it is still advisable to trade chemically produced oral substitutes for natural ones. In fact studies conducted among people who have successfully quit smoking shows that almost 25% people found

oral substitutes indispensable in their efforts to quit smoking, while many others preferred a clean break from cigarettes. Artificial cigarettes also come in handy to help those who are trying to quit smoking. This is especially true for people who associate with smoking psychologically.

Other than these options mentioned above also make sure that you have a balanced and healthy diet and indulge in some form of regular exercise. These exercises need not be very strenuous. Low-impact exercises like walking or a small jog everyday for at least twenty minutes serves the purpose and reduces the want to smoke. Besides make sure that you maintain a healthy diet and include fresh fruits and vegetables in your diet and limit fatty food as much as possible.