



QuitPack News

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Welcome to the second edition of the QuitPack News. This monthly e-newsletter helps us keep in touch with Yukoners who are moving toward becoming smoke free with the help of a QuitPack.

Here's how you can use this newsletter:

- Send in your comments about the QuitPack – likes, dislikes, etc.
- Let us know **your** tips for others as they try to quit.
- Suggest articles you'd like to see in the next issue.

We look forward to hearing from you!

The Staff at Health Promotion

Yukon
Health and Social Services

Dealing with Stress

If you light up when you are feeling stressed, you are not alone. Most smokers do. In fact, smokers often identify stress as a reason for relapse after they have been smoke-free. Smoking can be a temporary distraction or escape from negative situations, people or feelings. For many people, smoking is also associated with positive feelings, so it's not surprising that a smoker would turn to a cigarette when times are tough. However, as you've probably noticed, the relief you get when you light up is temporary – the stressful situation will be the same after the smoke break as it was before.

What is stress?

Many people believe that stress is an event or situation that has a negative effect on them (e.g., a difficult work situation or ending a relationship), while others focus on the body's response to stress (e.g., nervousness, tension, racing thoughts). Different people may respond to the same situation differently. You may have also noticed that you respond differently to the same stressful situation from one time to the next.

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How you respond to a situation on any particular occasion depends to a large extent on whether you believe you can change or manage the situation. Everyone has a somewhat different set of coping skills to change or manage stressful situations. When you already have the coping skills a situation calls for, you will experience less stress. On the other hand, you will probably feel much more stress when the demands of

the situation outweigh the coping skills you have.

Learning new coping skills can often help you manage a situation in a way that reduces your stress.

What can you do?

So what can a smoker who is becoming smoke-free do to manage stress differently? The good news is that the strategies that can help you become and remain smoke-free are the same ones that can help you manage stress throughout your life.

- ◇ Accept the fact that becoming smoke-free will be a *temporary* stress in your life. It will get better as you learn to live without cigarettes.
- ◇ Tackle stressful situations head-on. Figure out the source of the problem, think about the different things you might do to change the situation, and then decide what steps you will take.
- ◇ Break down big jobs into small, manageable tasks. Don't be afraid to ask family or friends for help to get things done.
- ◇ Organize your time, so that you get the essential things done and still have time left over to be with friends, stay active and pursue positive activities like reading or listening to music. **(Con't on page 2.)**

QuitPack Feedback

Paula is 10 days smoke-free. This is her second time quitting. She's finding the QuitPack useful. Here are her other suggestions: "I've got www.silkquit.com on my desktop at work. It's a free download, and measures money saved, time saved, cigarettes not smoked, etc. It's helped me a lot. Plus, there is an arrow for support, with great cognitive reasons to quit and stay quit."

"Another thing I'm going to do is quilting. I've signed up for a class. It's social, and there are no smokers."

Quit Tips

Dealing with Social Events

What can you do? (cont'd)

- ◇ Get enough rest and sleep. Eat well and limit alcohol and caffeine.
- ◇ Physical activity can help take the edge off anger, stress and frustration. Go for a walk, play with your dog, or (if you can't think of anything else) get a head-start on spring cleaning.
- ◇ A good way to deal with stress is talking to someone. Talk to family, a friend or co-worker and brainstorm solutions.
- ◇ Have fun! Laugh and be with people you enjoy.

The "patch" or Zyban can help reduce the stress of becoming smoke-free, but the strategies above will help you manage stress for a lifetime.

Getting together with friends who are smokers or going to a place where there will be smokers are probably the hardest situations for people who are becoming smoke-free. Seeing others smoke, and smelling tobacco smoke can create intense cravings for cigarettes.

Initially, you may want to avoid these situations altogether - until you've had practice in managing cravings. When you do go into situations where there is smoking, prepare yourself ahead of time. Before you arrive, picture yourself having a good time without cigarettes. Drink non-alcoholic beverages or limit yourself to one drink. Hang out with the non-smokers.

Promise yourself you will not smoke no matter what, but have an escape plan if the temptation gets too great. Ask a friend to help distract you, carry mints or gum to satisfy the mouth sensations, and if necessary, leave the party early. (Source: British Columbia Lung Association www.bc.lung.ca)

For more information on stress management, visit:
www.canadian-health-network.ca

Just for Laughs

- ☺ I stopped smoking and extended my life expectancy. My wife is furious.
- ☺ Did you know that Marlboro has its own line of outdoor gear for smokers? It is very functional. The denim jacket has electric heart paddles sewed right into the lining, and there's a backpack that can hold a portable respirator.



A one-pack a day smoker will spend \$70 per week, \$300 per month, and \$3,650 over the course of a year.

-Based on 1 pack Du Maurier cigarettes in the Yukon priced at \$10.

Websites of the Month

<http://www.smokefree.gov/> (USA) Online guide to quitting with useful information on how to become smoke-free successfully. Check out the Nicotine Addiction Test. Find out how much you depend on nicotine.



<http://www.thetruth.com> (USA) Interesting facts on tobacco and the tobacco industry. The animated downloads and games on this site are definitely something to try out whenever you feel the urge to smoke.

<http://www.smokersline.ca> Visit this Yukon site for computer games, puzzles and music to distract you when you have an urge to light up.



Please send your ideas & input for next month's QuitPack News to health.promotion@gov.yk.ca or call the Smokersline toll-free 1-866-221-8393.