



QuitPack News

Vol. 1 No. 1

December 2005

Welcome to the first edition of the QuitPack News. This monthly e-newsletter helps us keep in touch with young adult Yukoners (ages 18-34) who are moving toward becoming smoke free with the help of the 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 Promotions, Yukon Government

Dealing with Withdrawal

Nicotine is more effective at creating a chemical dependency than either heroin or cocaine. Nicotine creates an "alert dopamine/ adrenalin intoxication." When you're experiencing nicotine withdrawal, there are two separate effects – physical and psychological. Some people don't experience any withdrawal symptoms at all, while others have a harder time.

Unlike alcohol, the physical symptoms of nicotine withdrawal are not life-threatening. Your body first has to clear itself of nicotine, which can take up to 72 hours. Then, it must learn to live without nicotine, which generally takes ten days to four weeks. During this time, your body is adjusting to new oxygen and blood sugar levels, and your body chemistry is rebalancing. Symptoms like crankiness, fuzzy head, insomnia, etc. can be related to a drop in blood sugar once you stop nicotine. Drinking acidic juices, like cranberry, during the first few days of withdrawal may help your body clean out the nicotine and regulate blood sugar. Eating regular, small meals throughout the withdrawal period is important, and

will also reduce the chance of gaining weight. Deep breathing, relaxation

exercises, and physical activity are excellent ways to help rebalance your body and reduce anxiety when you are becoming smoke free.

Zyban or Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRT) like the "patch" or nicotine gum, can be very useful to help you with physical withdrawal symptoms. It's best to discuss NRT options with your doctor or pharmacist, and find one or a combination of solutions that work for you.

"To become smoke-free successfully, you need to consciously break the link between these triggers and smoking."

Most users find the psychological part of becoming smoke free more challenging. If you've used tobacco for any length of time, you have learned to associate smoking with many of your activities – watching TV, attending sport events, fishing, camping, or hunting, drinking alcohol and socializing; coffee breaks, or driving your car. The list of triggers can also include the sight or smell of a lit cigarette, smoking locations (e.g. bars), certain times of day (e.g. morning coffee), and even negative or positive moods. Associations can be powerful: you're reacting to a trigger with more than just your physical body. Even if you are using the patch or gum, you may still have strong urges to smoke when you are in situations where you used to smoke. It may be easy to quit smoking while you're on holiday, but as soon as you visit your old haunts back home, you may want to light up again.

So what do you do? To become smoke-free successfully, you need to consciously break the link between these triggers and smoking. The first step is to recognize the places and situations that trigger your urges to smoke. During the first few days and weeks, you don't want to put yourself in these situations. After you have had some success in managing urges and being smoke-free, then gradually return to hanging out with people, or in places, where you've smoked in the past. One way to resist urges in familiar situations is to distract yourself. Read a book, watch a movie, play cards – anything that will keep you from giving into your urges to smoke.

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Many people find that physical activity, deep breathing and relaxation exercises help keep them on track and distract them from finding excuses to start smoking again.

Another thing to watch for is how your mind can set you up to fail after you've had some success in becoming smoke free. Here are some common things that people who are becoming smoke free say to themselves as a way of justifying having a cigarette:

- I'll just use it to get through this rough spot.
- Today is not a good day; I'll quit tomorrow.
- How bad is tobacco, really? Uncle Harry chewed all his life and he lived to be over 90.
- Life is no fun without smoking.
- You've got to die of *something*.
- It's my only vice.

Be on guard for this type of thinking, which is like the proverbial Devil on your shoulder, a false friend. Prepare yourself to resist and stick to your goal to become smoke free. As you go through the first few months without tobacco, write down any triggers or justifications as they come up and recognize them for what they are: messages that can trap you into going back to using tobacco.

The important thing is to listen to your body. If you are concerned or alarmed by ANY physical or psychological condition or symptom, including continuing depression, please be sure to see a physician right away.

Websites of the Month

www.givingupsmoking.co.uk (England)

http://www.givingupsmoking.co.uk/CNI/Current_Campaign/advertisements/press_ads/



This website shows the media campaigns targeting young adults that are being used in the UK. It has lots of great information on becoming smoke free and on issues related to tobacco.



www.quit.org.au (Australia)

You can download this little guy, "Willpower", for free. He'll send you quit tips and facts, keep you distracted when you have an urge, and help you set and reach your quit goals. Plus, he's fun!

Laughs

- ☺ The biggest shock when you quit smoking is finding out what fast food really tastes like.
- ☺ I quit smoking once for six days. And then they untied me.

Quit Tip of The Day!

Keep a Journal

Start keeping a journal of your experiences as a non-smoker. If you get a craving, or feel frustrated, jot down your thoughts. Write about the positive things you've noticed since you quit smoking. Write a sentence, or write a page. You'll be able to look back on all kinds of situations and see that you got through each one of them, both positive and challenging alike, without smoking. (from www.quitnet.com)

Coverage for NRT's and Zyban

In the Yukon, Zyban and NRT's are covered by Insured Health Benefits for seniors, people with chronic diseases, and children of low-income families.

For Status First Nation and Inuit people, the following drugs may be approved through the Non-Insured

Health Benefits (NIHB):

- Nicotine Gums
- Nicotine Patches
- Zyban

You must have a physician's prescription, and you can get it filled at your local pharmacy.

Please send us your ideas & input for next month's QuitPack News!

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