

There are few people today, smokers included who do not suspect that smoking cigarettes is bad for their health. In spite of this, many of them find it difficult to give up the habit- permanently. If you are such a person, this pamphlet may help you not only to give up cigarettes but to stay off them.

### **Why do people smoke?**

The reason why people smoke varies with the individual. The reason why we start in the first place is not as important as the reason why we do which goes back to insufficient breast feeding, or a feeling of dependence, or a wish to feel grown up or to be one of the gang. If you continue to smoke after realizing that is bad for your health, you may have rationalized it by using one of the following reasons.

It keeps me from slowing down. I like handling a cigarette, it is pleasant and relaxing. It gives me something to do with my hands, if I give up cigarettes, I will put on weight.

Psychologists say that if we want to give up smoking it is important to decide first, why we smoke?

Most people find a cigarette gives them a "lift" it may be useful to know that the lift that is produced by nicotine is only a side effect of the poison. This is because nicotine is so deadly a single drop of it in the blood stream could kill an adult.

When the small amount of nicotine contained in a puff of cigarette smoke enters the blood stream through the lungs, the heart reacts by circulating the blood more quickly to stimulate the body's defensive powers. In some people the heartbeat accelerates by as much as 40 percent. The increased flow of blood through the system speeds up the chemical processes of the body, more oxygen is delivered to the brain, and more energy is furnished to the body cells and organs. This accounts for the feeling of stimulation or "lift" and helps the smoker to rise momentarily above his tensions, frustrations, and the problems of his daily existence. However, as the effects of the nicotine wear off, the heartbeat returns to normal and the body processes slow down. The regular smoker has accustomed his nervous system to

expect a regular artificial injection of nicotine that prods the blood pumping apparatus into action. When the expected stimulation for some reason is not forthcoming, a depressing effect takes place called "smoker's tension". This nervousness can be relieved only by more nicotine in the form of cigarette. In other words, the smoker has become a slave to a habit which, in effect, says, "Either you smoke now, or I will make you feel miserable until you do."

### **The cost of Smoking**

The smoker must have a good reason to stop smoking or he will never make it. Consideration of the cost of smoking might help-in terms of health, rather than money, although the latter is not to be discounted. For example, smoking one pack of cigarettes per day will have cost about Rupees Fifty or more.

The danger to health in cigarette smoking is not immediately evident. Some smokers can smoke for years without noticeable ill-effects. Suddenly, without warning, a heart attack occurs or lung cancer develops-the ill effects are cumulative. Certain ailments such as shortness of breath, smoker's cough or peptic ulcer may appear earlier. Somewhat later appear crippling diseases like chronic bronchitis, emphysema (in which the lungs progressively lose their elasticity and it becomes harder and harder to obtain enough oxygen) and Buerger's disease (in which the blood circulation in the hands and feet is impaired, sometimes leading to gangrene and amputation).

If the future seems far away for the smoker and he feels, therefore, that he will have plenty of time to think about quitting, let him listen to Dr. Linus Pauling, Internationally famous scientist and twice Nobel Prize winner, who says, "A one-pack-a-day smoker at the age of 50 is as old physiologically as a non-smoker aged 58. A two-pack-a-day smoker at 50 is as old as a non-smoker ages 66, and the smoker who smoked three packs a day all his life, at age 50 is as old physiologically and has the same high incidence of disease as the average non-smoker at the age of 74."

New research has shown that long time smokers lose

at least 10 years of life expectancy.

The smoker who is a parent also pays for his habit in the loss of the respect of his children who have a right to look to him for guidance. The smoking parent can tell his children that smoking is dangerous to their health, but "Do as I say, not as I do" has never been a good basis for the instruction of youth - young children are confused by it and other children see it as hypocrisy.

A smoker also pays for his habit in terms of loss of self-respect in that he finds himself dictated to by a three-inch cylinder of shredded tobacco leaf. As many smokers have quit the cigarette habit to achieve independence from tobacco slavery as have quit for reasons of health. One of the more subtle costs of smoking must be measured in terms of the loss of the capacity to enjoy the pleasures of life about us, compared to which the loss of taste and smell are relatively minor casualties. The confirmed smoker has lost this capacity because he has accustomed his brain and nervous system to a daily succession of high level nicotine jolts. So he is content to sit and smoke instead of using his energies in the creative pursuit of simple enjoyments.

### **The will to stop**

At the initial meeting of smoking withdrawal clinic, a psychiatrist dumfounded the 70 participants by telling them, "Not one of you really wants to stop smoking. Otherwise none of you would be here now. You would have stopped smoking long ago." He then explained that as long as smoking was considered attractive in some way and that giving it up involved sacrifice, the inner conflict which resulted, prevented a person from giving up the habit. Until one learns to hate the habit for all the misery it can bring, now and in the future, one will continue to be the victim of his inner conflict.

### **Tips which help**

1. Most people find it best to quit suddenly, but even to reduce smoking is of some value. Others find it effective to set themselves a "Q-day" or "Quitting Day" not more than two weeks ahead, and either quit on that day or taper off to zero.

2. Avoid situations in which you have been accustomed to smoke, such as drinking, playing cards, watching TV, even being in the company of other smokers. This should only be necessary during the withdrawal period which varies in length with each smoker.
3. Find substitutions for smoking. A man can overcome the urge to smoke by getting busy with a home-repair job, a woman can get busy with housework or a hobby.
4. Some find it useful to have lots of snacks handy, such as olives, dried fruits, celery, mints, crackers and gum.
5. Provide yourself with a supply of easy reading material or crossword puzzles to take up smoking time during such period as coffee breaks.
6. Keep a supply of fresh fruit and fruit juices, Vitamin A supplements to minimize your withdrawal discomfort and Vitamin B complex to help steady the nerves as you deprive your system of nicotine.
7. Start a "bank" into which you put the money you would have spent on cigarettes, then reward yourself with a present.

### **Withdrawal distress**

Although some people have reported no discomfort at all, before the end of the third day many would-be ex-smokers may experience some distress, ranging from mild to severe. Such symptoms may take many forms, depending on the smoker's own physical and psychological makeup and the length and strength of his addiction. Some people are subject to restlessness, insomnia, anxiety, tremor and palpitation. Others will experience diminished excitability such as drowsiness, amnesia, impaired concentration and a slower pulse. None of these disturbances are harmful, but if they worry you, have a chat with your doctor. Some will begin to put on weight for one or all of these reasons; because food will smell and taste much better after not smoking for a while and the appetite will improve,

because many smokers will reach for a snack instead of a cigarette; and because of better utilization of food by the body. Overweight is a health hazard, but not as serious a hazard as smoking, according to one heart specialist, "a gain of 3 Kg in a 50 Kg man is no serious health risk. Only an 24 Kg gain in a 50 Kg man would bring his health risk from overweight to the level of high risk from continued smoking".

Tackle one problem at a time. After you have conquered the cigarette habit, start to learn how to take in no more calories than your body can use in a day and you will also conquer the weight problem.

The three formidable enemies of the new fledged ex-smoker are tension, frustration and boredom. Avoid them if you can. One way to relieve tension is deep breathing and exercise. Fill up your spare time with so much work and play you'll have little time to think about smoking. Breaking the cigarette habit is not usually easy, but the rewards for the victor will make it all seem worthwhile.

### **Prevention is better than cure**

Many cancers, including lung cancer, can be prevented. Learn and act upon these Seven Safeguards against Cancer.

#### **For Everybody**

1. Have a regular medical check-up.
2. Don't smoke cigarettes.
3. Have your dentist check for abnormal conditions.
4. Arrange with your doctor for a bowel examination.
5. Avoid excessive exposure to sunlight.

#### **For Women**

6. Practice regular breast self examination.
7. Have a regular Pap test.

# HELP FOR SMOKERS



*This pamphlet was prepared in public interest  
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**GAWEYLON  
POST BOX NO. 286  
DEHRADUN GPO - 248001  
UTTARAKHAND  
INDIA**

**Website - [www.gaweylon.com](http://www.gaweylon.com)  
Email - [gaweylon@gmail.com](mailto:gaweylon@gmail.com)**