Smoking & Tobacco Use

Fact Sheet

Cessation

(updated November 2007)

Nicotine is the psychoactive drug in tobacco products that produces dependence.\textsuperscript{1,2} Most smokers are dependent on nicotine,\textsuperscript{2} and smokeless tobacco use can also lead to nicotine dependence.\textsuperscript{4} Nicotine dependence is the most common form of chemical dependence in the United States.\textsuperscript{3} Research suggests that nicotine is as addictive as heroin, cocaine, or alcohol.\textsuperscript{5} Examples of nicotine withdrawal symptoms include irritability, anxiety, difficulty concentrating, and increased appetite.\textsuperscript{1} Quitting tobacco use is difficult and may require multiple attempts,\textsuperscript{2} as users often relapse because of withdrawal symptoms.\textsuperscript{1,2} Tobacco dependence is a chronic condition that often requires repeated intervention.\textsuperscript{6}

Health Benefits of Cessation

- People who stop smoking greatly reduce their risk of dying prematurely.\textsuperscript{7,8} Benefits are greater for people who stop at earlier ages, but cessation is beneficial at all ages.\textsuperscript{7,8}
- Smoking cessation lowers the risk for lung and other types of cancer.\textsuperscript{7} The risk for developing cancer declines with the number of years of smoking cessation.\textsuperscript{7,8}
- Risk for coronary heart disease, stroke, and peripheral vascular disease is reduced after smoking cessation.\textsuperscript{7,8} Coronary heart disease risk is substantially reduced within 1 to 2 years of cessation.\textsuperscript{8}
- Cessation reduces respiratory symptoms, such as coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath.\textsuperscript{7} The rate of decline in lung function is slower among persons who quit smoking.\textsuperscript{7,8}
- Women who stop smoking before or during pregnancy reduce their risk for adverse reproductive outcomes such as infertility or having a low-birth-weight baby.\textsuperscript{8}

Quitting Interest and Behavior Among Tobacco Users

- Among current U.S. adult smokers, 70% report that they want to quit completely.\textsuperscript{9} In 2006, an estimated 19.2 million (44.2%) adult smokers had stopped smoking for at least 1 day during the preceding 12 months because they were trying to quit.\textsuperscript{10}
- An estimated 45.7 million adults were former smokers in 2006.\textsuperscript{10}
More than 54% of current high school cigarette smokers in the United States tried to quit smoking within the preceding year.\textsuperscript{11}

**Tobacco Use Cessation Methods**

- Brief clinical interventions by health care providers can increase the chances of successful cessation, as can counseling and behavioral cessation therapies.\textsuperscript{6} Treatments with more person-to-person contact and intensity (e.g., more time with counselors) are more effective.\textsuperscript{6} Individual, group, or telephone counseling are all effective.\textsuperscript{6}

- Pharmacological therapies found to be effective for treating tobacco dependence include nicotine replacement products (e.g., gum, inhaler, patch) and non-nicotine medications, such as Bupropion SR (Zyban\textsuperscript{®}) and Varenicline Tartrate (Chantix\textsuperscript{TM}).\textsuperscript{6}

**References**


For Further Information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Office on Smoking and Health