Why Is It So Hard to Quit Smoking?

What the Tobacco Companies Don't Want You to Know

Nicotine, the addictive substance in tobacco, is one of the hardest to quit. Many have said quitting smoking was harder than quitting heroin or cocaine.

How Does Nicotine Alter Your Brain?

Nicotine fits in areas of your brain called receptors. This releases dopamine, which gives you a "rush" of good feelings. The trouble is, it's temporary. Over time, the brain learns it needs nicotine to feel good. And, the more you smoke, the more receptors it builds. Billions of them. For some, more than others, which is a reason why some folks have a harder time quitting.

Three ways to get started with the free, 24/7 Quit Line:

- Call 800-QUIT-NOW
- Text READY to 200-400
- Chat Online

Produced by the University of Wisconsin Center for Tobacco Research & Intervention

"This was my 6th time through a 30-day treatment, and I relapsed, they were all smoking facilities. Every one ought to be non-smoking because I know how smoking and addictions go hand-in-hand." - Ronnie, who quit all his addictions once he quit smoking
What Happens When I Quit Smoking?

When the receptors in your brain do not get nicotine, the “feel-good” rush is cut off. This can:

• Give you headaches, bad mood, hunger, or low energy.
• "Trigger" you to crave tobacco in certain situations.

The Good news is:

• When you quit, the number of nicotine receptors in your brain will eventually return to normal.
• Cravings will happen less and less.
• In time, the cravings will fade away completely!

12 HOURS AFTER QUITTING:
The carbon monoxide level in your blood begins to drop to normal.

20 MINUTES AFTER QUITTING:
Your heart rate and blood pressure drop to normal levels.

1 YEAR AFTER QUITTING:
Your risk of coronary heart disease is half that of a smoker.

5-15 YEARS AFTER QUITTING:
Your risk of stroke is that of a nonsmoker.

2 WEEKS TO 3 MONTHS AFTER QUITTING:
Your circulation and lung function improve.

10 YEARS AFTER QUITTING:
Your risk of dying from lung cancer is about half that of a smoker. Your risk of throat cancer, bladder cancer and kidney cancer decrease.

15 YEARS AFTER QUITTING:
Your risk of coronary heart disease falls to that of a nonsmoker’s.

1-9 MONTH AFTER QUITTING:
Coughing and shortness of breath decrease.

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