

Why is quitting so hard?

Three things usually work together to make you want to smoke

Nicotine addiction

Nicotine is the drug in tobacco that causes addiction. At first, nicotine causes you to feel good and may distract you from unpleasant feelings. Why? Smoking nicotine releases “feel-good” signals in the brain. This good feeling does not last long, making you want to smoke again. Over time, your body requires more nicotine to feel the same, which leads you to smoke more.

Habit

Smoking can make you feel good, so you tend to do it over and over. Smoking also gives you something to do with your hands or mouth. As smoking becomes part of your routine, you no longer think about it – it is now a habit.

Triggers

Triggers are things that can make you want to smoke—like driving the car, finishing a meal, or being with other smokers. There are many other triggers too. Each person may have a variety of them. What are some of your triggers?

What may help you quit smoking?

- Talk to your healthcare provider about quitting smoking
- Look at Web sites such as www.smokefree.gov, which has information about quitting smoking
- Join community programs for people who are trying to quit smoking

What are your ideas about what might help you?

Talk to your healthcare provider about quitting. Make a plan.
Stick to it. Get help if you need it.