



Share the Wellness Tip

December 6, 2013

Set The Stage To Quit Smoking



**STOP
SMOKING
AND
STAY
HEALTHY**

If you're a smoker, breaking the habit is the best thing you can do for your health. Most smokers today know that smoking is bad for their health and harmful to people around them. They know they should quit, but they also know it's going to be hard. A big behavior change, such as stopping smoking, doesn't happen overnight. Smokers go through several stages on the way to quitting for good. Here's how to tell which stage you're in and what to do to move forward.

Stage 1: Thinking About It

At this stage: You would like to quit smoking within the next six months, but you haven't made any definite plans yet. **To move forward:** Write down the reasons you want to stop smoking. For example, in addition to improving your health, you may want to save money or be a better role model for your kids. Commit to quitting.

Stage 2: Getting Ready

At this stage: You plan to quit smoking within the next 30 days and you want to be prepared. **To move forward:** Pick a date to quit. Tell family and friends and ask for their support. Talk with your doctor. Call a telephone quit line (800-QUIT-NOW) or sign up for a smoking cessation program.

Stage 3: Taking Action

At this stage: You stopped smoking within the last six months. **To move forward:** When you crave a cigarette, take deep breaths to relax. A quick change in setting or activity may help. For example, you might step outside for a minute, or walk up and down a flight of stairs.

Stage 4: Staying the Course

At this stage: You quit smoking more than six months ago. **To stay on track:** Remind yourself of all you've gained by quitting. If you slip up and have a cigarette, don't overreact. Just figure out what went wrong and plan a better way to cope with that situation next time.

Sources: American Cancer Society; Harvard School of Public Health



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