

WITHDRAWAL SYMPTOMS

If you experience physical or emotional changes while you're quitting, don't worry. While they may be annoying or frustrating, these changes are actually just signs that your body is healing itself. Your body is trying to adjust to the sudden disappearance of the chemicals it has been used to absorbing on a regular basis.

Keep in mind that these signs usually go away completely within a week or two. And in the meantime, nicotine replacement products can be used to help your body adjust.

Some of the temporary changes you may notice are:

TENSION, IRRITABILITY AND DIFFICULTY CONCENTRATING

These symptoms are usually the result of the drop in your body's nicotine level. If you are having problems with tension or irritability, think about starting nicotine replacement therapy. If you are already using a nicotine replacement product, ask your pharmacy if you might do better with a change in dosage.

Minor irritability and tension can be handled through stress management techniques, too. Ask your pharmacist for a handout on Stress Management.

DEPRESSION

If you feel bad enough after quitting that you think the problem goes beyond just tension and irritability, see your doctor—especially if you have a family history or a personal history of depression.

COUGHING OR INCREASED MUCUS

Your cilia (little "brushes" in your respiratory system that sweep dust particles away from your lungs) are paralyzed when you smoke. Once you stop smoking, they become active again, and they work overtime to get rid of any mucus or tar lodged in your lungs. Generally this is most noticeable right after you quit. It is accompanied by coughing, and lasts for about a month or two. All you can do is be patient and let your body do its cleanup work! In the meantime, hot liquids and lozenges may help relieve your cough.

DISRUPTED SLEEP PATTERNS

You may become very tired — or very energetic — once you quit. If you are tired, take naps when possible and try to get plenty of sleep each night. If you can't sleep, try relaxation and deep breathing techniques. If those don't work, take advantage of the extra time and take care of any projects you've been putting off!

In either case, your sleep patterns will probably return to normal in a week or two.

Ask your pharmacist for any or all of these other specialized handouts for new non-smokers: Stress Management, Weight Management, Routines, Meals and Coffee, Alcohol and Socializing, Being Around Smokers.