



# ALCOHOL AND SOCIALIZING

You are at a party. It's been a week since you've quit smoking. You're enjoying your favorite drink and your favorite people's company, having a great time, not even thinking about cigarettes.

A couple hours later a good friend arrives, and she's smoking. By now you are on your fourth drink. While she is talking to you, all you notice is her cigarette. You begin to think how good one would taste with your drink. You know that she would give you one if you'd just ask. The more you think about it, the stronger the urge becomes.

*Sound familiar?* Whether it is at a party, a bar, or some other social gathering spot, many people slip back into smoking while drinking alcohol during the first few weeks after they quit.

The link between alcohol and smoking can be very strong. Alcohol reduces your control over your actions. And cigarettes are usually readily available at bars and parties.

The best advice here is to avoid social gatherings where alcohol will be served, for at least two or three weeks. Explore other ways to socialize with your friends.

However, if you do choose to go out to these types of gatherings, here are some tips to help you deal with the tempting situations that are likely to arise:

- **At home, develop and practice coping techniques to help you handle yourself.** For example, practice saying out loud, "No, thanks, I don't smoke," just in case someone offers you a cigarette. Make a commitment to yourself not to ask anyone for a cigarette.
- **If you have an urge to smoke, say to yourself, "I can make it," and think about something else.**
- **Go to the event with nonsmoking friends.** Have a friend with you that you can talk to if you have an urge to smoke.
- **Consider not drinking alcohol.** Or, if you do choose to drink, limit yourself to two drinks.
- **Change from what you usually drink.** If you always have beer, drink wine instead. Changing from the brand of beer or liquor you generally drink will also help you to break the liquor and cigarette link.
- **Before you go, decide to leave the event from time to time to get some fresh air.**
- **If you are using Nicorette gum, make sure to have an adequate supply with you.** Instead of having a cigarette, use a piece of Nicorette if the urge to smoke hits you.

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