

URMC smoking cessation expert offers tips for smokers trying to quit

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With the start of a New Year, millions of smokers across New York State and more throughout the U.S. will attempt to quit smoking. Quitting smoking is a popular resolution, and an appropriate one given World Health Organization estimates that smoking contributes to five million deaths each year. For smokers who are considering quitting as part of a new year's resolution, pre-planning is an important step for a successful outcome.

"Quitting [smoking](#) is the best decision anyone can make to improve their overall health," said Scott McIntosh, Ph.D., director of the Greater Rochester Area Tobacco Cessation Center and associate director of the Smoking Research Program at the Department of Community and Preventive Medicine at the University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC). But McIntosh stresses that having a plan in place is essential to being successful to one's smoking cessation efforts.

"Research shows that if a person makes a plan, builds a support system of family, friends and professionals, that they have a greater chance of successfully quitting smoking and beating nicotine addiction," said McIntosh, who also serves as an Associate Professor in the Department of Community & Preventive Medicine and URMC's James P. Wilmot Cancer Center.

McIntosh offers 12 simple tips for quitting:

1. Make a plan for quitting. Talk to your doctor about strategies such

as quitting "cold turkey" versus nicotine replacement or other medication therapies.

2. If you can give up cigarettes for 24 hours, you double your chance for success.

3. Tell your friends, family and co-workers that you plan to quit and rally them to help you stick with it.

4. Consider using approved medications - nicotine gum, patch, lozenges, spray, inhaler, Chantix or Zyban - to help you quit.

5. Use resources available from the [New York State Smokers' Quitline](#): 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487) and www.nysmokefree.com , the New York Smokers' Quitsite.

6. Use local resources (covered by Medicaid and many insurance plans) at the Healthy Living Center, which provides individual counseling and a quitting plan with tobacco dependence counselors and medical staff: (585) 530-2050.

7. Remove all ashtrays, lighters, matches and cigarettes from the house. Just seeing them can make you want to smoke.

8. Start eating sugarless hard candy or chewing crunchy vegetables - like carrot sticks - to keep your mouth busy. Consider using cinnamon candy, because its "burning" sensation mimics the feeling of smoking and kills the craving.

9. Drink a lot of water. It helps keep you feeling "full," and prevents you from overeating and gaining weight. It also helps "cleanse" your body of the toxins from years of smoking.

10. Practice breathing deeply or take a walk when you're craving a cigarette. Smoking involves taking long deep breaths, but now it'll be fresh air rather than chemicals entering your lungs.

11. Remind yourself why you are quitting - and reward yourself every day you make it without smoking cigarettes.

12. Age doesn't matter - older smokers are less likely to try to quit, but when they do try, they are more likely to succeed.

[The New York State Smokers' Quitline](#) is also prepared to assist the more than two million smokers in New York State who say they want to quit. A new advertising campaign that will run throughout the month of January highlights the risks of smoking and directs smokers to the free services that can help them be successful in their resolution to quit tobacco, including the Quitline.

Provided by University of Rochester Medical Center

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