

Smoking cessation expert offers tips for smokers trying to quit

January 2 2013

(Medical Xpress)—With a New Year approaching and healthy lifestyle choices topping the list of personal resolutions, millions of smokers across New York State and more throughout the U.S. will attempt to quit smoking. Making an effort to stop smoking is an appropriate one given World Health Organization estimates that smoking contributes to five million deaths each year.

Smokers who are considering quitting as part of a new year's resolution may also be giving the most precious gift possible to their children and grandchildren. A recent study in Great Britain revealed that of those children who have parents that smoke, more than 50 percent say their one wish for Christmas is for their parents to stop [smoking](#). In addition, more than 73 percent of those children frequently worry about their parent(s) dying.

"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 Public Health Sciences 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 Public Health Sciences 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 may learn something important to help you when you plan to quit for good.
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.

"Using approved medicines can help and talking to experts can help – and using both strategies can even further improve your chances of quitting for good," McIntosh said. "Within just 24 hours, the carbon monoxide – which hinders blood from bringing oxygen to your cells, tissues and organs – will be removed from your body, and the mucus and smoking debris will start to clear from your lungs, making breathing easier.

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.

The Quitline offers [smokers](#) a free nicotine patch starter kit, coaching tips for quitting, self-help materials, and motivational messages. The Quitline can be reached at 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487) Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m., and Friday through Sunday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Additional support is available through a 24/7

online smoke-free community at www.nysmokefree.org , and additional tips and resources can be found at www.facebook.com/NYQuits and twitter.com/nysmokefree .

Citation: Smoking cessation expert offers tips for smokers trying to quit (2013, January 2) retrieved 17 July 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-01-cessation-expert-smokers.html>

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