

If you plan on quitting, please give this to your spouse or significant other to read.



Helping A Smoker Quit: Do's and Don'ts

General hints for friends and family

Do respect that the quitter is in charge. This is their lifestyle change and their challenge, not yours.

Do spend time doing things with the quitter to keep his or her mind off smoking -- go to the movies, take a walk to get past a craving (what many call a "nicotine fit"), or take a bike ride together.

Do try to see it from the smoker's point of view -- a smoker's habit may feel like an old friend that has always been there when times were tough. It's hard to give that up.

Do help the quitter with a few chores, some child care, cooking -- whatever will help lighten the stress of quitting.

Do celebrate along the way. Quitting smoking is a BIG DEAL!

Don't judge, nag, preach, or scold. This may make the smoker feel worse about him or herself. You don't want your loved one to turn to a cigarette to soothe hurt feelings.

Don't take the quitter's grumpiness personally during his or her nicotine withdrawal. The symptoms usually pass in about 2 weeks.

Don't offer advice. Just ask how you can help with the plan or program they are using.

If your ex-smoker "slips"

Don't assume that he or she will start back smoking like before. A "slip" (taking a puff or smoking a cigarette or two) is pretty common when a person is quitting.

Don't scold, nag, or make the quitter feel guilty. Be sure the quitter knows that you care about him or her whether or not he or she smokes.

If your quitter relapses

Research shows that most people try to quit smoking 5 to 7 times before they succeed. (It's called a relapse when smokers go back to smoking like they were before they tried to quit.) If a relapse happens, think of it as practice for the time he or she will succeed. Don't give up your efforts to encourage and support your loved one. If the person you care about fails to quit or starts smoking again:

Do praise him or her for trying to quit, and for whatever length of time (days, weeks, or months) of not smoking.

Do encourage him or her to try again. Don't say, "If you try again..." Say, "When you try again..." Studies show that most people who don't succeed in quitting are ready to try again in the near future.

Do encourage him or her to learn from the attempt. Things a person learns from a failed attempt to quit may help him or her quit for good next time. It takes time and skills to learn to be a non-smoker.

If you are a smoker

Do smoke outside and always away from the quitter.

Do keep your cigarettes, lighters, and matches out of sight. They might be triggers for your loved one to smoke.

Don't ever offer the quitter a smoke, even as a joke!

Do join your loved one in his or her effort to quit. It's better for your health and might be easier to do with someone else that is trying to quit, too!

Call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-227-2345 to find out what resources might be available to you for your quit attempt.

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