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Balanced Living[®]

YOUR GUIDE TO EVERYDAY HEALTH

“
I'M USUALLY IN
THE HOSPITAL
SEVEN DAYS
A WEEK, BUT I
LOVE, LOVE, LOVE
WHAT I DO.

”
—DR. LISA NEWMAN
DETROIT, MI

**BREAK
FREE**
FROM THE FEAR OF
RECURRENCE

+
**WHY
PEOPLE
STILL
SMOKE**

RELENTLESS RESEARCHER

Talking with Dr. Lisa Newman, head of Henry Ford
Health System's Breast Oncology Program

FALL 2017
hap.org/balancedliving

be a
Quitter

Of the more than **7,000** chemicals in a
burning cigarette – 69 are cancer causing.

Acetone

carbon monoxide

formaldehyde

tar



About 15 percent of adults older than age 18 in the United States – over 36 million people – still light up on a regular basis, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Stopping smoking can improve your health – right away. Are you or a loved one struggling to stop smoking? Here's why it's so hard – and **what you can do.**

Why Do People Smoke?

There's one common thread that binds nearly all adult smokers: They lit their first cigarette before they were 18. More than 80 percent of today's adult smokers started before that age, notes Bill Blatt, national director of tobacco programs for the American Lung Association. And most of those smokers were likely hooked after just 100 cigarettes. "Starting smoking is a disease of the young," says Blatt. "Quitting smoking is something adults have to deal with."

But quitting smoking isn't as simple as breaking a habit. "These products contain nicotine, which is highly addictive," says Brian King, Ph.D., deputy director for research translation, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office on Smoking and Health. "The sooner a person starts smoking, the greater the likelihood of suffering from a smoking-related disease."

As with most addictions, there are three aspects: physical, mental and social. Nicotine fills the physical link in the addiction chain; mental comes about with the brain changes and stress relief that result from smoking cigarettes. The social element – smoking at the bar with friends or during a break in the workday – is perhaps just as difficult an obstacle to conquer.

Can Smokers Stop?

Every smoker can quit – and the sooner the quitting process starts, the better. "The benefits of quitting begin almost immediately, and continue to increase the longer you remain fully abstinent from cigarettes," says King.

It may take multiple tries to quit – and that's OK. Instead of adopting a black and white view – you're

either a smoker or you're not – experts encourage people to focus on what helped and what hurt each time and build from there. "When we first start working with someone interested in quitting, we ask them, 'Have you tried to quit before?'" says Blatt. "Everybody says yes. Then we ask, 'How long did you quit?' People get depressed with the answer, but we tell them whatever time it was is an accomplishment. We say it wasn't a failed quit, it was a practice quit. The more you practice, the better you get."

What Works — and What Doesn't

As millions of people quit smoking, there's been great effort to understand what helped them. Quitting cold turkey? Ninety-five percent of the time it doesn't work, says Blatt. Although a few might find success with alternative treatments such as hypnosis or acupuncture, "neither one has evidence to support it," he says. "It's not going to hurt you, but if you are doing that, we recommend to also do something else that we know helps people quit."

What does work is addressing those three addiction aspects – physical, mental and social – through medication, counseling from a trained professional, and support. There are seven approved smoking-cessation medications, and their impact is real. "The use of brief counseling and medications can double the likelihood that a smoker will quit," says King.

The social support can come from a plan that a professional helps you create, and from family and friends who help you navigate your changing day – taking a walk at work instead of a smoke break, for example. "A lot of the people we talk to already feel bad about smoking, and they think we are going to make them feel worse – but we're not," says Blatt. "We're on their side. If they're ready to quit, we're ready to help." ■

A NOTE ABOUT E-CIGARETTES

One thing that's not an approved smoking cessation method? E-cigarettes. They're considered a tobacco product, and their health effects are still not fully understood. E-cigarettes especially represent a risk for young people: According to the CDC, 16 percent of U.S. middle and high school students use e-cigarettes. There's currently limited quality control of the e-liquid, and most e-cigarettes contain nicotine and possibly other harmful ingredients such as heavy metals, volatile organic compounds and fine particles.

4 TOOLS TO HELP QUIT SMOKING

- Work with your health care professional. HAP has several tools to support you. Find more at hap.org/stopsmoking.
- Call your state's quitline at (800) QUIT-NOW. Counselors can help you build a quit plan and recommend over-the-counter medications.
- Contact the American Lung Association at (800) LUNG-USA. The organization has online, phone, and face-to-face programs, including Freedom From Smoking (freedomfromsmoking.org).
- Make a plan to quit. Motivated to take the first step? Participate in the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout on Nov. 17. Any amount of time that you quit puts you closer to improved health.