



## Don't cut down, just quit!

As with all lifestyle and behaviour changes such as exercising more, drinking in moderation and modifying our diet, being able to stop smoking can be really difficult at the best of times. Around December/January when parties or paying bills (or both) make life especially stressful, these kinds of resolutions can be really hard to keep.

Nevertheless, when it comes to smoking, any time is a good time to quit; and it's never too late. Recent studies have shown that for smokers who quit at age 50 the risk of a tobacco-related death is reduced by about two thirds; and for those who stop before middle age the risk is little more than for non-smokers.

However, becoming and staying a non-smoker doesn't happen by accident. Smokers who plan before they quit are significantly more successful than those who don't; and planning can be done quickly and easily. The decision to quit must be yours and yours alone, but to help you plan for long term success you should enlist the support of family and friends. Your pharmacist can also offer you valuable support.

If your attempts to quit have so far been unsuccessful, don't give up; it's certainly worth what can sometimes seem a bit of a struggle.

Nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) could be an option worth considering. These nicotine

substitutes help to treat the withdrawal symptoms and cravings which can make it so difficult to quit.

If you are concerned about the adverse health consequences of smoking, transferring your addiction to the so-called light, mild or low-tar variety of cigarettes is not a good option. Research shows that with these cigarettes smokers change their smoking style to somehow obtain the same amount of tar and nicotine - a message delivered in the current anti-smoking advertising campaign which Australia's "consumer watchdog" (the ACCC) has forced tobacco companies to fund.

When you do stop smoking, your body will most likely still have a need for nicotine - the addictive component of cigarettes - and this is what creates the urge to smoke again. By taking nicotine in a "clean form" - that is without the dangerous carbon monoxide and tar ingredients - the physical withdrawal symptoms are reduced, allowing you to focus your energies on breaking the smoking habit.

Thus NRT lessens the likelihood of experiencing irritability, tenseness, drowsiness and lack of concentration. Four NRT products are currently available in Australia: patches, gum, inhaler and lozenges.

To help you quit, your pharmacist can help you choose the most appropriate product

*For further information, our Pharmacists  
are available to answer any questions*

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