

A close-up photograph of a woman with long brown hair blowing bubbles. She is holding a red plastic cap with a pink straw in her mouth. Numerous iridescent bubbles are floating in the air around her. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green field.

LIFESTYLE
MANAGEMENT

MY
SMOKING

M+M
Medimed
Managing your healthcare security

NOT READY TO QUIT SMOKING

You may not be quite ready to quit or even reduce your tobacco use.

But by working through this booklet you may become more willing to think about quitting in the near future. Smoking is a tough habit to break. But, quitting (or smoking less) may be the single best thing you can do for your health. To gain the support of the important people in your life, share this booklet with them.

What Keeps You Smoking?

You smoke, even knowing that it harms your health. You're not alone.

Here are a few reasons why many people still smoke.

- Addiction and fear of withdrawal are common reasons for not quitting. Cigarettes contain chemicals that keep you hooked. But, once you stop smoking, many of these chemicals are out of your body within days.
- Previous quit attempts haven't worked. That's OK, most smokers try to quit several times before they succeed. Think about what you've learned from your earlier quit attempts and try again.
- Downplaying the dangers of smoking goes along with the belief that "it can't happen to me." But it can, the list of health problems with proven links to smoking is long. Despite this, your health risks start to decrease when you stub out that last cigarette.
- Smoking helps control stress, or so you think. But, from the body's standpoint, this isn't true. Nicotine in tobacco revs up the body, this increases the heart rate and your blood pressure. This actually limits your ability to really deal with stress in a healthy way.

Reasons to Quit

Many people quit smoking for health reasons or for family members.

Here are a few of the benefits gained by quitting smoking.

- Being a good role model
- Smelling better and having fewer wrinkles
- Saving money
- Lowering the risk of heart attack, lung cancer, stroke and many other diseases

Post Your List

Have you thought of a least two reasons why you might want to quit smoking? Post your benefits where you'll see them each day. As you learn more about the many benefits of a smoke-free life, add to your list. A change that benefits you is worth thinking about.

Cigars, Pipes and Smokeless Tobacco

If you smoke cigars or a pipe, or use smokeless tobacco (snuff, plug or chewing tobacco), this booklet may help you think about using tobacco less or quitting for good.

Have You Thought About Quitting?

Without realizing it, you may already have thought about quitting or cutting down. Maybe one of the statements below rings a bell. Do you:

- Notice information about the dangers of smoking?
- Watch or read stories on cigarettes and disease?
- Ask other people how they kicked the habit?
- Worry about the impact your smoking has on loved ones?
- Remember what you've seen or heard about successful quit-smoking programs?
- Wonder if stop-smoking aids really help?

BECOMING AWARE & FINDING HELP

You're probably aware of at least some of the dangers of smoking. Maybe you're able to ignore them. Or, maybe you blame your habit on the tobacco companies or on a spouse or friend who smokes. Defending yourself is normal, but it doesn't help you change. Instead, ask yourself what thoughts and feelings prevent you from quitting. Now is also a good time to think about the people who could support your efforts to change.

What Do You Believe?

Smoking is a habit that can harm your health. Knowing this, what beliefs do you have about smoking that allows you to continue? Do you think it keeps you thin? Or do you believe it helps you to relax? Maybe you've told yourself you don't have what it takes to quit – or even to cut down. Becoming aware of such beliefs helps you gain control

Build Your Support System

Other people can help you see yourself more clearly. In fact, the people you're close to are likely to know your defenses and habits even better than you do. Can you welcome their insights? People who care about you want to help. Their support can give you the courage to consider change. Think about the people who would support you, as well as specific ways they might help. The more support you have, the better your chances of staying quit.

When and Why You Smoke

You can learn a lot by tracking your smoking for a week. With each cigarette, keep track of:

- Where you are, who you're with and what you're doing.
- How you're feeling and what you're thinking.
- If you really want that cigarette, or if you're smoking out of habit.

Identifying Your Barriers

Habit and the urge to smoke are strong. But as you become more aware of why you light each cigarette, your interest in changing is likely to increase. Keep in mind, small challenges can become big barriers to reaching your goal. Now's a good time to identify barriers that have blocked your path to quitting smoking in the past.

Roadblocks To Change

You can always find a way to stop your own progress. And often there's a grain of truth in the excuse. Smoking may very well keep you from snacking at night. Now's the time to see excuses for what they are. Don't let them hold you back. Here are some common roadblocks that could slow your progress. Try adding a few of your own favourite excuses for not quitting smoking.

Common Excuses

- I'll gain weight.
- I've tried to quit – nothing works.
- Smoking calms me down.
- My partner smokes

Your Excuses

Add to Your Benefit List

You're discovering your defenses and breaking through barriers. This means you're spending less effort in blocking change. You may even be willing to learn more about the dangers of smoking. The more you learn about the many ways smoking harms your health, the more benefits you'll find for making this change. Go back and reread your list of reasons to quit or cut down

on smoking. Did you know that your risk of heart attack decreases within 24hrs of quitting? Now add to your list of benefits – and be sure to post the list where you will see it often!

Tippling the Balance

You've listed some benefits of quitting smoking. And you've thought about ways to bypass barriers to change. Weigh the pros and cons. You may have more reason to change than to stay as you are. A little fear – of the future, of failure, of finding out more about your-self – is normal. Just don't let it hold you back!

What if...

You've probably asked this question more than once in your life. Now use it as a way to psych yourself up. Keep an open mind and make an effort to be honest.

...You Keep Smoking?

See yourself in 5 years in the future. What will life be like if you don't quit smoking? How will you look and feel? Will you have a smoker's cough and wrinkled skin? Picture yourself in 10 years. Will climbing just one flight of stairs leave you breathless? What health problems will you have?

...You Kick the Habit?

You can affect your future life. What if you quit smoking for good? How will you look and feel in 5 years? What will be doing in 20 years? Planning a family reunion? Walking in a charity event, or hiking with grandkids? In this case, the value of changing is truly priceless.

Are You Ready to Decide

Can you see a better future for yourself? Change is a choice. It's also a process, and knowing where you are is as important. Now that you're more aware of your-self, are you ready to act? Do you really believe

that quitting smoking will improve your life? If you're excited about change and the possibilities it brings, you may be ready to move on.

Review Your Benefits

Choosing change is more than a leap of faith. It's what you've been working toward. Remind yourself of all the ways you'll benefit by quitting or cutting down on smoking. Review and add to your list of benefits often. By now, the benefits of change probably outweigh the reasons not to!

Ready for the Next Step?

Read the statements below. If you often feel this way, you're ready to move on to the next stage of change – getting prepared.

- I feel uneasy when I think about the harmful effects of smoking.
- Quitting smoking would bring me and my family many benefits.
- I'm fed up with my smoking habit.

If You Aren't Ready

You may see reasons to change, yet not be ready to do it. Don't give up. Keep adding to the list of benefits you gain by not smoking. Talk with your supporters, and seek more information. Fact finding is an important part of the change process.

No Matter What

Congratulations! By working through this booklet you've taken a big step toward cutting down or even quitting entirely. You've become more aware of a problem and have started thinking about how it affects your life.

