



Coping with Withdrawal Symptoms

After quitting you may experience some of these withdrawal symptoms as your body works to get rid of harmful chemicals and overcomes its addiction to nicotine.

SYMPTOM	DURATION	CAUSE	RELIEF
IRRITABILITY	2-4 weeks	Physical craving for nicotine	Calming activities (i.e. walk, hot bath, meditation)
FATIGUE	2-4 weeks	Response from the absence of nicotine, a stimulant	Get extra rest, avoid wearing yourself out
INSOMNIA	2-4 weeks	Brain wave function is altered by nicotine	Avoid caffeine before bedtime; relaxation techniques
COUGHING, DRY THROAT, NASAL DRIP	A few days	Airways blocked by mucous are being cleared	Drink more fluids, try cough drops or hard candies
DIZZINESS	A few weeks	More oxygen is getting to the body	Move cautiously and slowly
LACK OF CONCENTRATION	A few weeks	A reaction to the lack of stimulation from nicotine	Plan ahead to avoid adding extra stress
CONSTIPATION, GAS, STOMACH PAIN	1-2 weeks	Temporary decrease in intestinal activity	Drink more fluids; increase fiber in diet (vegetables, fruits, whole grains)
HUNGER	Up to several weeks	Urge to smoke can feel like the urge to eat	Avoid the cigarette; eat something low-calorie or find another distraction
WEIGHT GAIN	Up to several months	Nicotine is an appetite suppressant	Consume low-calorie food and drinks; increase physical activity
CRAVING FOR A CIGARETTE	Frequent first few days; can last for months or years	Body wants another dose of nicotine	Most urges only last a few minutes; find a distraction
HEADACHES	1-2 weeks	Increased oxygen & decreased carbon monoxide levels in the body	Find ways to relax; drink more water

Consult your health care provider before quitting smoking and engaging in any new physical activities. Also consult a health care provider if you experience extreme or persistent symptoms to verify they are related to quitting smoking.

