



Ways to Quit Smokeless Tobacco

Smokeless tobacco is just as addictive and harmful to one's health as smoked tobacco. In fact, quitting smokeless tobacco is similar to quitting the types that are smoked. Here is some important information for regular smokeless tobacco users to keep in mind when thinking about quitting.

What are some methods for quitting smokeless tobacco?

There is no right way to quit smokeless tobacco: one approach may work better for some than for others. However, there are several methods that have been successful for regular smokeless tobacco users wanting to quit.

One method is **cold turkey or abrupt cessation**. This involves choosing one date on which to stop using all tobacco products.

Another method is **gradual reduction**, which involves one of three different approaches: brand switching, nicotine fading, and blending. **Brand switching** involves changing to smokeless tobacco brands that contain lower levels of nicotine. After reaching a certain level, the user sets a quit date and stops cold turkey.

Nicotine fading means gradually reducing the number of dips or chews per day. This method requires self-monitoring of your tobacco use in order to consistently decrease the amount of tobacco used per day.

The third method, **blending**, involves mixing a non-nicotine snuff substitute with smokeless tobacco. Gradually, the

proportion of snuff substitute to smokeless tobacco is increased until the individual is only using the snuff substitute. At that point, the user can quit entirely.

Nicotine replacement therapy (such as the patch or gum) and **Bupropion** (a prescription medication; Zyban/Wellbutrin) can also be used to quit smokeless tobacco. A doctor or pharmacist should be consulted before using any of these products.

Any method should be used as part of a quit plan. Typically, you will create a plan that, once in place, leads you to becoming tobacco free in about two weeks.

How can I create a plan to quit?

Following a quit plan can increase your chances of successfully quitting. Things to keep in mind when creating a plan:

- Set a quit date
- Choose a quit method
- Tell family and friends that you are quitting
- Get rid of items related to using tobacco
- Think of ways to deal with cravings

When setting a quit date, choose a reasonable date to become smoke free. Too soon and you may not be fully prepared. However, too far in advance and you may put off actually quitting.

Having a support system when quitting is important. Before you quit, let family and friends know how they can help. Counselors at Quitline Iowa are always a good source of support and information, too.

What can I expect after I quit?

Once you've quit, you may experience common withdrawal symptoms while your body is getting rid of the chemicals from tobacco. These symptoms may include: irritability, tiredness, trouble sleeping, lack of concentration, hunger, and cravings for a dip or chew. These symptoms won't last long and there are ways to deal with them.

It is a good idea to drink lots of water after you quit to help flush the nicotine out of your system. It can be helpful to avoid caffeine and alcohol for a while since they may trigger an urge to use tobacco. You may also want to have oral substitutes on hand when a craving strikes, such as sugarless hard candy and gum or sunflower seeds. Think of activities that can also distract you from the urge to use smokeless tobacco. Activities may include taking a walk, working on a hobby, practicing relaxation techniques or talking to a friend. Remember: the urge to use only lasts a few minutes.

What if I start using smokeless tobacco again?

It's not uncommon for a person to start using smokeless tobacco again. In fact, it may take several tries before a person stays quit. This doesn't mean that you can't successfully quit. Use what you've learned from this quit attempt to plan for the next one. You might be ready to try again right away, or you may need some time to prepare.

