



HEALTH AWARENESS

Smoking Myths And Facts

(NAPSA)—While quitting smoking can be hard, *not* quitting can be even harder on your health, your wallet and your relationships. Knowing the truth about some smoking myths may make quitting a little easier.

Myth 1: I can quit anytime.

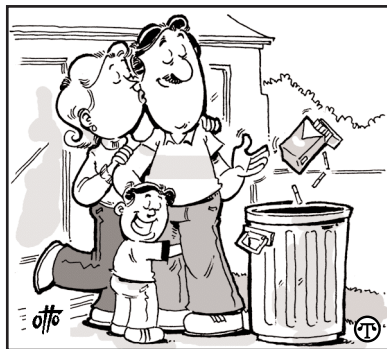
Quitting isn't just about willpower. Smoking addiction has two basic causes: nicotine and habit. Nicotine dependency is stronger than many people realize. Years of smoking make the brain dependent on nicotine—the brain craves nicotine and these cravings can be difficult to resist. Medicinal nicotine helps curb the cravings, freeing the quitter to focus on changing the habit.

Myth 2: I've smoked so long, quitting won't make a difference to my health.

Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do to improve your health at any age. Only twenty minutes after you quit, your blood pressure drops. Within three months, your heart attack risk begins to drop, and your lung function begins to improve.

Myth 3: I'm going to gain a lot of weight.

Actually, the average weight gain after quitting smoking is just five pounds. Using a nicotine medication, particularly nicotine gum or lozenge, has been shown to help. These products can also reduce withdrawal symptoms, including hunger. Other ways to control your weight: Use the time you would spend on a smoke break to take a walk or do some other type of exercise. If you miss the hand-to-mouth connection, try snacking on low-calorie treats or fruit and drinking



Smokers who want to quit should develop a plan, find a support program and determine the best course of therapy for themselves.

six to eight glasses of water a day.

Myth 4: I smoke light cigarettes so I'm not at risk.

Cigarette companies admit that there's no safe cigarette. Once you inhale tobacco smoke you're exposed to more than 4,000 chemicals and at least 69 cancer-causing substances. In the over forty years since they were introduced, "Light" cigarettes have not reduced smoking-related disease or death. Don't be fooled by the smoother feel on your throat or chest.

Myth 5: I'm too addicted to quit.

There are ways to increase your chances of success. Talk with your doctor, set a quit date, use proven quit-smoking products and ask for support from friends and family. Most importantly, don't give up. Most smokers don't succeed on their first try, and learning from each attempt can help you get closer to becoming a nonsmoker.

For more information and support to help you or someone you care about stop smoking, visit www.quit.com.