



spotlight on health

10 Ways To Help Keep Yourself Smoke-Free

(NAPS)—Consider the benefits of not smoking: no more hacking cough, improved senses of smell and taste, increased vitality and better physical appearance (less yellow on teeth and fingers).

For many people, quitting smoking can be a way to enjoy life more. Fortunately, there's help available. For example, over-the-counter nicotine patches and gum can help relieve the physical urge to smoke and withdrawal symptoms.

A support program may help you overcome the psychological and behavioral aspects of smoking as you reduce your nicotine intake. Here are some suggestions:

1. Write up a contract that you can sign that states your commitment to stop smoking. Display the contract in a place where everyone can see it.

2. Tell your friends and family members that you have decided to quit smoking, and give them the reasons for this life-changing decision. Have them reinforce these reasons when asked.

3. Extend an invitation to a smoker friend or family member to quit with you, but don't force them to do so. Nagging a smoker who is not ready to quit will not help him or her—as you likely know from experience.

4. Ask that friends and family not smoke around you.

5. If any of your loved ones smoke, ask that ashtrays and cigarettes be kept out of your sight.

6. Tell your friends and family that you need to be the one to bring up the subject of quitting.

7. Ask a friend or family member who is an ex-smoker, or one who is also attempting to quit, if they would be your quitting “buddy” and let you vent frustra-



Friends and family make up a strong support system for people who are trying to quit smoking.

tion or talk about your good days. Call your “buddy” when you experience a craving.

8. Let your friends and family members know how they can help you relieve some of your stress. Maybe your best friend could go for a walk with you, your spouse could take you to your favorite restaurant or your kids could help out with chores.

9. Make a list of all the things you want to do when you are smoke-free that you haven't done before (e.g., go on a bike trip, run a marathon). Have your loved ones make a list of all the activities they want to do with you.

10. Emphasize how much you appreciate the support that your friends and family members are giving you.

If you have chosen nicotine replacement therapy to help quit smoking, there are now clinically proven behavior support programs available with the purchase of over-the-counter products. For more information, visit www.committedquitters.com.