

Minnesotans: Quitting Tobacco Is Hard. Here's Help.

(NAPS)—When it comes to the people of Minnesota protecting their health from tobacco, there's good news, bad news and better news.

The good news is, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly seven out of 10 smokers want to quit. In fact, quitting smoking is one of the most popular New Year's resolutions, and overall, cigarette smoking is down in the state.

The bad news is about 580,000 Minnesotans still smoke. And smokers who try to quit "cold turkey" are only successful about 5 percent of the time.

The better news is a little planning and support can greatly increase your odds of success. When you decide to quit smoking, QUITPLAN Services can help. For nearly 20 years, it has provided free support to all Minnesotans who want to quit smoking, with a menu of options including free patches, gum or lozenges; e-mail and text support; quit guides; and free phone coaching. More than 175,000 people have used the service so far. To make quitting easier for you, QUITPLAN Services has come up with these four tips:

Quitting Tips

1. Make a plan and stick to it. Set a quit date. Use a quit medication, such as gum, patches or lozenges, to reduce symptoms of nicotine withdrawal. People who make a plan succeed more often than those who don't.

2. Stay active. Making physical activity a daily habit can help you fight cravings, avoid setbacks and feel better in general. It works because exercise stimulates the brain in positive ways—boosting mood, improving concentration and relieving stress. All of these benefits help conquer urges and give you more confidence to remain tobacco-free. Even walking briskly for five to 10 minutes can decrease cravings. Exercising with others provides support and helps keep your mind off tobacco.

Start exercising during your quit so you can use physical activity as a way to conquer withdrawal symptoms and cravings. Then, become even more active after you quit to keep up your confidence.

Select an activity that you enjoy so you'll be more likely to keep at it. Consider walking, bicycling, hiking, jog-



Quitting tobacco isn't easy but with help and your own determination, you can do it.

ging, water exercise, tennis, basketball or soccer.

3. Ask for help. There are support systems all around; don't be afraid to use them. People who seek support from others are more likely to succeed.

Whether it's a family member, a friend, a co-worker or a professional phone coach, most people are more than willing to help you stay strong against tobacco.

4. Surround yourself with a tobacco-free environment. Rid your home, car and work area of all tobacco-related items (lighters and ashtrays, as well as the tobacco products themselves). Soak tobacco products in water so you cannot use them. Check for any "forgotten" cigarettes or tobacco in old jackets, purses, tackle boxes, desk drawers or glove compartments. Wash any bedding, pillows and clothes that smell like tobacco. If you can, have your carpets, furniture, drapes and car interior cleaned professionally to get rid of the tobacco smell. Clear your head of tobacco as much as possible. Start thinking like a nonsmoker and get enthusiastic about quitting.

Quitting is hard, but with your determination and any support you want from QUITPLAN Services—texts, e-mails, quit guides, phone coaching, free nicotine patches, gum or lozenges—you can do it.

Learn More

For more facts and tips and to access free help, go to www.quitplan.com.