

How Do I Help Someone I Care About Quit?

Most importantly, don't nag, threaten, plead or bribe. Family and friends can have a real impact on a smoker and his or her success in quitting, but smokers have to make their own decisions. You can't make someone quit smoking, and you can't quit for them. Instead, show you care and be supportive. Here are some tips for how you can show your support for that special person during that difficult period.

- Agree that quitting smoking is difficult.
- Ask periodically how things are going. (Avoid asking too frequently.) Remember they have probably smoked for many years, so quitting is going to be a long process. They will probably think about smoking for many months to come.
- Offer praise, encouragement and rewards.
- Ask what you can do to help.
- Help him/her avoid situations where he/she will be tempted to smoke.
- Express confidence that the smoker will be successful in staying off cigarettes.
- Make an extra effort to keep close contact by phone or in person.
- Be a calm, smiling, reassuring influence.
- Help your friend keep a good sense of humor. Tell jokes and send cartoons. Watch a funny video or go to a comedy club (smoke-free though).
- Agree to give up something you love. (chocolate, alcohol, coffee, soda). It will show great support.
- Show you care by inviting your friend to a movie, workout, museum, library, swimming or wherever smoking is not permitted.
- Provide your friend with a survival kit of carrot and celery sticks, sugarless gum, candy, pencils, straws and/or cinnamon sticks.
- If you're an ex-smoker, share your quitting experiences rather than lecture on the dangers of smoking. What worked for you may work for your friend.
- Send flowers or balloons to celebrate.
- Avoid negative criticism about past failures, lack of willpower or that they can't quit, as this will only make it more difficult.
- Pamper the person quitting. This has plagued them for years. They are going to need and deserve a little extra tender loving care, pampering and attention.
- Be understanding and accepting of irritability - it will ease. Try to help him/her understand it as well.
- Set up a series of rewards.
- Designate your loved one's quit date as a day to be celebrated monthly, as you would a birthday or anniversary. After all this is the day that they finally became a free person.

If he/she slips:

- Never nag, threaten or criticize, especially if your friend slips and smokes.
- Help turn it into a learning experience, not a guilt trip.
- Assist him/her in figuring out why he/she smoked and how to prevent it in the future.

Do & Don't Say

Do Say: "Instead of going to that party tonight where people will be smoking, let's go to a movie."

Don't Say: "I'm warning you - if you go tonight, you'll give in and smoke a cigarette."

Do Say: "Okay, so you smoked one. That's not unusual. Let's see why you smoked this one time and think of ways to prevent it from happening again."

Don't Say: "Well, you have only yourself to blame. Don't you know that one cigarette leads to another, and you'll soon be right back where you were? But it's your choice!"

Do Say: "How about a walk tonight? It'll get us out of the house and keep you away from cigarettes."

Don't Say: "Stop fidgeting! You're driving me crazy. For Pete's sake, think of something else to do."

Do Say: "What did you decide to buy with all the money you are saving from quitting?"

Don't Say: "If you don't quit smoking those cancer sticks, you know what's going to happen to you,"
- or - "You don't want to end up like your uncle did, do you?"

Do Say: "I've read that being restless and edgy is normal, especially at first. Let's take a walk. It may help."

Don't Say: "I'd rather put up with your smoking rather than the way you've been carrying on since you stopped."

Do Say: "I know it must be very difficult. Look how hard it is for me to stay away from fattening food!"

Don't Say: "Is that cigarette smoke I smell? C'mon, I thought you said you were going to quit for good this time."

Do Say: C'mon millions have kicked the habit. You can too. I'll be here to see you through it.

Don't Say: "I can't believe you'll ever quit. But okay - I'll help you one more time."

Do Say: "Remember I promised I'd treat you to a movie when you hadn't smoked for a week? Well, let's go!"

Don't Say: "Hey I thought you really wanted to quit. Now you've ruined your record. Well, I'm not going to say I told you so, but ..."

Do Say: "I know it's tough sometimes, but if we work together, I bet we can find a way to deal with every smoking urge."

Don't Say: "Call me if you have a cigarette. I'll try to help."

Do Say: "You have gone ___ # of days/weeks. I'm very proud of your success. Let's do something fun to celebrate."

Don't Say: "You have gone ___# of days/weeks, you could probably have just one cigarette."

