

How Your Doctor Can Help You Quit Smoking

You may want to consult a health care professional such as your primary care physician who can help you develop a treatment plan. She will begin with an assessment to:

- evaluate the severity of your addiction to nicotine
- determine your current health status and risk for tobacco-related illness
- determine your level of support from family, co-workers and friends for quitting
- evaluate reasons to quit and other motivating factors
- evaluate your previous attempts to quit
- discuss your obstacles to quitting
- evaluate your smoking habits and things that trigger smoking
- assess treatment options and medication
- develop a treatment plan
- set a quit date

Based on this evaluation, your health care professional will determine a treatment plan for you. Once your treatment starts, you will probably meet with the health care professional five to seven times, each visit lasting about 15 to 30 minutes.

During these visits, your health care professional will be able to provide support and may modify your treatment plan if necessary. The following tips can help you make the most of these visits:

- Invite a close family member or friend to go with you if possible. He can support the treatment process by offering alternatives to situations, rituals or routines that make you want to smoke. For example, he may offer to take a walk with you after dinner rather than having a cup of coffee, which may remind you of smoking.
- Tell your health care professional about any medication you take.
- Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of your treatment plan.
- Discuss your cravings and withdrawal symptoms.
- Discuss obstacles to your treatment plan.

Help is available

You don't have to quit smoking on your own. Several over-the-counter and prescription treatments have proven to be safe and effective in helping people quit.

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