



Symptoms of Recovery

Symptom: Irritability

Cause: Heavy smokers are more likely to report this symptom. The irritability people experience after quitting is caused by the body's craving for nicotine.

Solution: Try relaxing exercise, drink water, take a warm shower or brisk walk. Talk with your doctor about nicotine replacements. Irritability associated with quitting will lesson over time. (Average duration 2-4 weeks)

Symptom: Fatigue

Cause: Nicotine is a stimulant, so it is not surprising that quitting smoking causes fatigue. Heavy smokers are more likely to feel tired after quitting. Fatigue often occurs in the afternoon from 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Solution: Talk with your doctor about nicotine replacements; drink water, take a nap or a brisk walk.

Symptom: Insomnia

Cause: Nicotine affects brain wave functioning and may influence sleep patterns. It is not uncommon in the first few days after quitting for the ex-smoker to wake up frequently during the night. Dreaming about smoking is also common. Coughing after quitting may also contribute to wakefulness.

Solution: Avoid caffeine after 6 p.m., and try relaxation techniques. This symptom rarely lasts longer than a week after quitting.

Symptom: Depression

Cause: It is not uncommon to feel a little depressed after quitting tobacco. Some say that quitting smoking is like losing a close friend. Bouts of crying are not uncommon.

Solution: Understand that the feelings are normal, talk to a friend, write a letter to yourself, volunteer at an animal shelter or other place you can help others; go to a movie.

Symptom: Tightness in the chest

Cause: It is not uncommon to experience a tightness in the chest after quitting. Chest tightness is probably due to the tension created by the body's need for nicotine. Chest tightness occurs more often in those who report ex-smoker's cough, which may mean that the chest muscles are sore from coughing.

Solution: Try relaxation techniques, especially deep breathing. Talk with your doctor about nicotine replacements. Try to drink more water.

This symptom passes within a few days after quitting.

Symptoms of Recovery *(continued)*

Symptom: Stomach pains, constipation, gas

Cause: Intestinal movement may decrease for a brief period when a smoker/chewer lowers his/her tobacco use.

Solution: Eat lots of roughage, like raw fruits, vegetables, bran and cereal; also drink six to eight glasses of water each day; exercise.

Symptom: Hunger

Cause: The craving for a cigarette or chew is often confused with hunger pangs. As a result, many people find themselves eating more after quitting. Heavy tobacco users experience feelings of hunger more often after quitting than light users.

Solution: Talk with your doctor about nicotine replacements. Try low calorie snacks or beverages. This symptom is usually most intense the first week after quitting, and may persist for several weeks.

Symptom: Coughing, Dry Throat

Cause: Ex-smoker's cough is the body's way of getting rid of the extra mucous that has blocked airways. Dry throat is caused by the fact that the body is no longer producing a lot of mucous to protect the airways from the toxins.

Solution: Try drinking cold water, fruit juice or tea, chew gum, or have hard candy. These symptoms rarely last longer than a few days after quitting.

Symptom: Dizziness

Cause: The occasional dizziness that some ex-smokers experience is caused by extra oxygen that the body is getting.

Solution: Take extra caution in the things that you do, change positions slowly. This symptom rarely last longer than a day or two after quitting.

Symptom: Lack of Concentration

Cause: Changing a habit as ingrained as tobacco use takes effort and contributes to problems in concentration. The tobacco-users body needs time to adjust to a routine of not having the constant stimulation from nicotine.

Solution: Plan workload to account for your temporary lack of concentration. Avoid additional stress during the first few weeks. Most ex-tobacco users say that concentration is not a problem after a few weeks of being tobacco free.

For help on how to quit smoking, contact Mom's Quit Connection 888.545.5191

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