



## HOW TO:

# BE AROUND SMOKERS

Nicotine is the addictive drug in tobacco. Your body will go through nicotine withdrawal when you try to cut down or stop using tobacco. That is why you might feel some withdrawal symptoms or have a hard time dealing with certain situations that are linked to your tobacco use.



Why does this happen?

- Seeing a person light a cigarette will usually trigger the urge to smoke, even if you hadn't been thinking of smoking until then. When you stop smoking, a burning cigarette may smell terrible to you, or it may smell good and make you want to light up.
- Your decision to stop smoking may upset some family and friends, especially those who still smoke. It is not unusual for smokers to try to undo the efforts of those who are trying to quit. They may do this without even being aware of it.
- If you think of stopping smoking as giving up something, seeing others smoke can make you more aware of your "loss" and can trigger feelings of sadness.

How common is this?

- At first, it may be hard to stop taking "smoke breaks" with your smoking buddies but this will pass in time. Try to stick with your non-smoking friends, family, and co-workers until you get more practice being a non-smoker.
- If you have relatives or friends who usually smoked with you, but you don't see them for several months after you quit, the first time you're back together you may have very strong urges to smoke, so be prepared! As you spend more time with them and don't smoke, the urges will become weaker and weaker.

What can you do about it?

- Do not buy, carry, light, or hold cigarettes for others.
- Quit with a buddy.
- Try not to get angry when family, friends, or co-workers hassle you for quitting.
- For your first few weeks as a non-smoker, try to avoid risky situations with smokers:
  - ❑ Ask others to be mindful of their cigarettes by emptying ashtrays often, not leaving open packs lying around, and being sure to take their cigarettes with them when they leave.
  - ❑ Put a "No Smoking" sign on your door and have an outside area where smokers may go if they wish to smoke.
  - ❑ If you are in a group and others light up, excuse yourself, and don't come back until they have finished. Better yet, try to spend time with your smoking friends in places where they cannot smoke—a restaurant, mall, movie theatre, museum, etc.

**Be aware that you will not be able to avoid smokers forever, so be prepared to go through some situations with them. Know ahead of time that you may have strong urges so you'll be ready if they happen. Practice turning down the offer of a cigarette. Say it out loud so you get used to hearing yourself say, "No, thanks, I've quit."**